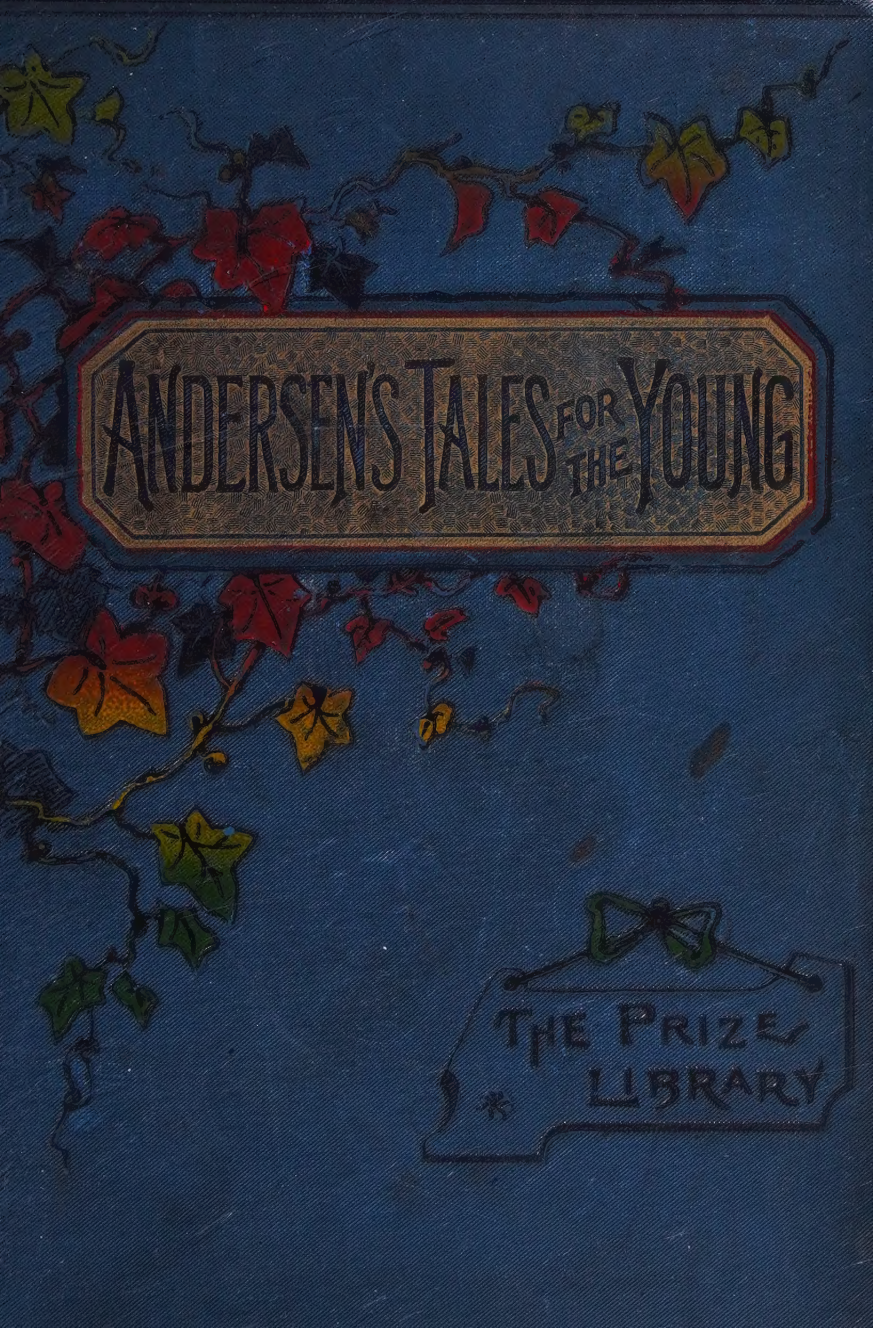

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HANS ANDERSEN'S

TALES FOR THE YOUNG



"SHE TOOK OFF HER GIRDLE AND TIED ONE END OF IT ROUND THE BUTTERFLY."

p. 25.

HANS ANDERSEN'S

TALES FOR THE YOUNG

A NEW TRANSLATION

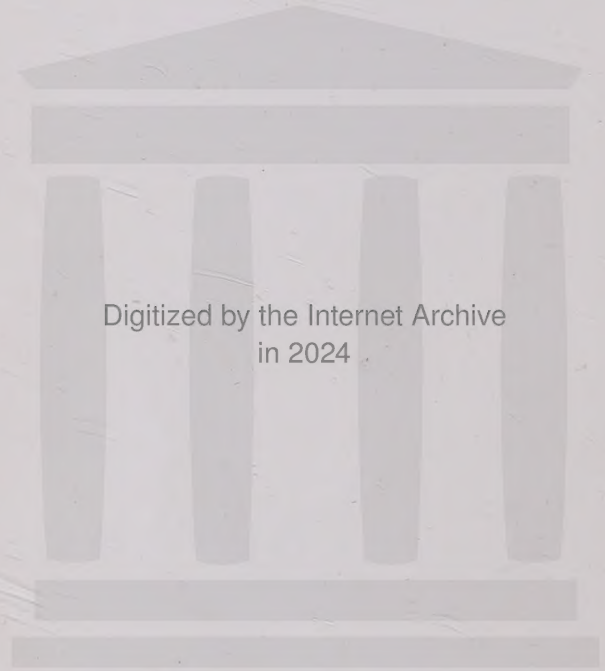
BY

MRS. H. B. PAULL

WITH ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATIONS



LONDON
FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.
AND NEW YORK
1897



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When the earth is white with glittering snow,
And the north wind sadly wails,
We sit on the rug by the Christmas fire,
And pore over fairy tales.

Over Andersen's stories ever fresh
We pore by the flickering light,
Though the grown-up people speak warning words,
And beg us to "spare our sight."

How pleasant it is! We would fain read on
For hours longer if we might!
And forget in this fairy world of ours
The claims of sleep and of night.

Shall we ever, when years are gone and past,
Know many such hours of joy,
As those which we spent reading fairy tales
In the days when girl and boy?

No! but the memory will long survive,
And its light around us cast;
We shall live in gleams of the fairy world,
When Fancy recalls the past.

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HANS ANDERSEN'S

TALES FOR THE YOUNG.

The Fir-Tree.

Far down in the forest, where the warm sun and the fresh air made a sweet resting-place, grew a pretty little fir-tree; and yet it was not happy, it wished so much to be tall like its companions—the pines and firs which grew around it. The sun shone, and the soft air fluttered its leaves, and the little peasant children passed by, prattling merrily, but the fir-tree heeded them not. Sometimes the children would bring a large basket of raspberries or strawberries, wreathed on a straw, and seat themselves near the fir-tree, and say, "Is it not a pretty little tree?" which made it feel more unhappy than before. And yet all this while the tree grew a notch or joint taller every year; for by the number of joints in the stem of a fir-tree we can discover its age. Still, as it grew, it complained, "Oh! how I wish I were as tall as the other trees, then I would spread out my branches on every side, and my top would overlook the wide world. I should have the birds building their nests on my boughs, and when the wind blew, I should bow with stately dignity like my tall companions." The tree was so discontented, that it took no pleasure in the warm sunshine, the birds, or the rosy clouds that floated over it morning

and evening. Sometimes, in winter, when the snow lay white and glittering on the ground, a hare would come springing along, and jump right over the little tree; and then how mortified it would feel! Two winters passed, and when the third arrived, the tree had grown so tall that the hare was obliged to run round it. Yet it remained unsatisfied, and would exclaim, "Oh, if I could but keep on growing tall and old! There is nothing else worth caring for in the world!" In the autumn, as usual, the woodcutters came and cut down several of the tallest trees, and the young fir-tree, which was now grown to its full height, shuddered as the noble trees fell to the earth with a crash. After the branches were lopped off, the trunks looked so slender and bare, that they could scarcely be recognised. Then they were placed upon waggons, and drawn by horses out of the forest. "Where were they going? What would become of them?" The young fir-tree wished very much to know; so in the spring, when the swallows and the storks came, it asked, "Do you know where those trees were taken? Did you meet them?"

The swallows knew nothing; but the stork, after a little reflection, nodded his head, and said, "Yes, I think I do. I met several new ships when I flew from Egypt, and they had fine masts that smelt like fir. I think these must have been the trees; I assure you they were stately, very stately."

"Oh, how I wish I were tall enough to go on the sea," said the fir-tree. "What is this sea, and what does it look like?"

"It would take too much time to explain," said the stork, flying quickly away.

"Rejoice in thy youth," said the sunbeam; "rejoice in thy fresh growth, and the young life that is in thee."

And the wind kissed the tree, and the dew watered it with tears; but the fir-tree regarded them not.

Christmas-time drew near, and many young trees were cut down, some even smaller and younger than the fir-tree who enjoyed neither rest nor peace with longing to leave its forest home. These young trees, which were chosen for their beauty, kept their branches, and were also laid on waggons and drawn by horses out of the forest.

"Where are they going?" asked the fir-tree. "They are not taller than I am: indeed, one is much less; and why are the branches not cut off? Where are they going?"

"We know, we know," sang the sparrows; "we have looked in at the windows of the houses in the town, and we know what is done with them. They are dressed up in the most splendid manner. We have seen them standing in the middle of a warm room, and adorned with all sorts of beautiful things,—honey cakes, gilded apples, playthings, and many hundreds of wax tapers."

"And then," asked the fir-tree, trembling through all its branches, "and then what happens?'

"We did not see any more," said the sparrows; "but this was enough for us."

"I wonder whether anything so brilliant will ever happen to me," thought the fir-tree. "It would be much better than crossing the sea. I long for it almost with pain. Oh! when will Christmas be here? I am now as tall and well grown as those which were taken away last year. Oh! that I were now laid on the waggon, or standing in the warm room, with all that brightness and splendour around me! Something better and more beautiful is to come after, or the trees would not be so decked out. Yes, what follows will be grander and more splendid. What can it be? I am weary with longing. I scarcely know how I feel."

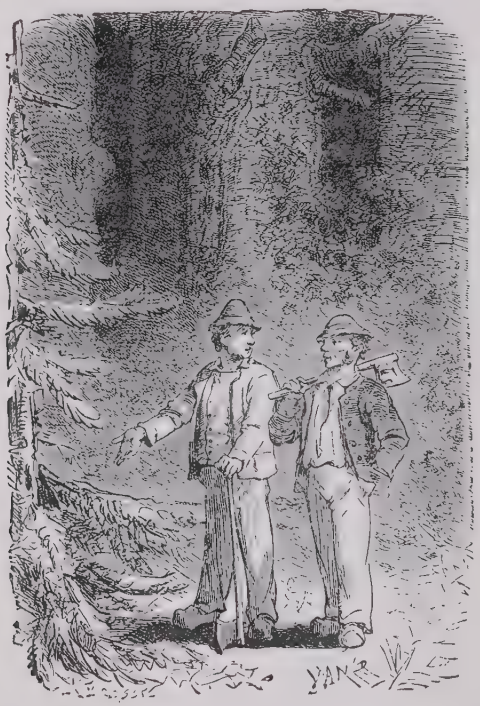
"Rejoice with us," said the air and the sunlight. "Enjoy thine own bright life in the fresh air."

But the tree would not rejoice, though it grew taller every day; and, winter and summer, its dark-green foliage might be seen in the forest, while passers-by would say, "What a beautiful tree!"

A short time before Christmas, the discontented fir-tree was the first to fall. As the axe cut through the stem, and divided the pith, the tree fell with a groan to the earth, conscious of pain and faintness, and forgetting all its anticipations of happiness, in sorrow at leaving its home in the forest. It knew that it should never again see its dear old companions, the trees, nor the little bushes and many-coloured flowers that had grown by its side;

perhaps not even the birds. Neither was the journey at all pleasant. The tree first recovered itself while being unpacked in the courtyard of a house, with several other trees; and it heard a man say, "We only want one, and this is the prettiest."

Then came two servants in grand livery, and carried the fir-tree into a large and beautiful apartment. On the walls hung



"PASSERS-BY WOULD SAY, 'WHAT A BEAUTIFUL TREE!'"—*p.* 15.

pictures, and near the great stove stood great china vases, with lions on the lids. There were rocking-chairs, silken sofas, large tables, covered with pictures, books, and playthings, worth a great deal of money,—at least, the children said so. Then the fir-tree was placed in a large tub, full of sand; but green baize hung all round it, so that no one could see it was a tub, and it stood on a

very handsome carpet. How the fir-tree trembled! "What was going to happen to him now?" Some young ladies came, and the servants helped them to adorn the tree. On one branch they hung little bags cut out of coloured paper, and each bag was filled with sweetmeats; from other branches hung gilded apples and walnuts, as if they had grown there; and above, and all round, were hundreds of red, blue, and white tapers, which were fastened on the branches. Dolls, exactly like real babies, were placed under the green leaves,—the tree had never seen such things before,—and at the very top was fastened a glittering star, made of tinsel. Oh, it was very beautiful!

"This evening," they all exclaimed, "how bright it will be!" "Oh, that the evening were come," thought the tree, "and the tapers lighted! then I shall know what else is going to happen. Will the trees of the forest come to see me? I wonder if the sparrows will peep in at the windows as they fly? shall I grow faster here, and keep on all these ornaments during summer and winter?" But guessing was of very little use; it made his bark ache, and this pain is as bad for a slender fir-tree, as headache is for us. At last the tapers were lighted, and then what a glistening blaze of light the tree presented! It trembled so with joy in all its branches, that one of the candles fell among the green leaves and burnt some of them. "Help! help!" exclaimed the young ladies, but there was no danger, for they quickly extinguished the fire. After this, the tree tried not to tremble at all, though the fire frightened him; he was so anxious not to hurt any of the beautiful ornaments, even while their brilliancy dazzled him. And now the folding doors were thrown open, and a troop of children rushed in as if they intended to upset the tree; they were followed more slowly by their elders. For a moment the little ones stood silent with astonishment, and then they shouted for joy, till the room rang, and they danced merrily round the tree, while one present after another was taken from it.

"What are they doing? What will happen next?" thought the fir. At last the candles burnt down to the branches and were put out. Then the children received permission to plunder the tree.

Oh, how they rushed upon it, till the branches cracked, and had it not been fastened with the glistening star to the ceiling, it must have been thrown down. The children then danced about with their pretty toys, and no one noticed the tree, except the children's maid, who came and peeped among the branches to see if an apple or a fig had been forgotten.

"A story, a story," cried the children, pulling a little fat man towards the tree.

"Now we shall be in the green shade," said the man, as he seated himself under it, "and the tree will have the pleasure of hearing also, but I shall only relate one story; what shall it be? Ivede-Avede, or Humpty Dumpty, who fell downstairs, but soon got up again, and at last married a princess."

"Ivede-Avede," cried some. "Humpty Dumpty," cried others, and there was a fine shouting and crying out. But the fir-tree remained quite still, and thought to himself, "Shall I have anything to do with all this?" but he had already amused them as much as they wished. Then the old man told them the story of "Humpty Dumpty," how he fell downstairs, and was raised up again, and married a princess. And the children clapped their hands, and cried, "Tell another, tell another," for they wanted to hear the story of "Ivede-Avede;" but they only had "Humpty Dumpty." After this the fir-tree became quite silent and thoughtful; never had the birds in the forest told such tales as "Humpty Dumpty," who fell downstairs, and yet married a princess.

"Ah! yes, so it happens in the world," thought the fir-tree; he believed it all, because it was related by such a nice man. "Ah! well," he thought, "who knows? perhaps I may fall down too, and marry a princess;" and he looked forward joyfully to the next evening, expecting to be again decked out with lights and playthings, gold and fruit. "To-morrow I will not tremble," thought he; "I will enjoy all my splendour, and I shall hear the story of Humpty Dumpty again, and perhaps Ivede-Avede." And the tree remained quiet and thoughtful all night. In the morning the servants and the housemaid came in. "Now," thought the fir, "all my splendour is going to begin again." But they dragged

him out of the room and upstairs to the garret, and threw him on the floor, in a dark corner, where no daylight shone, and there they left him. "What does this mean?" thought the tree, "What am I to do here? I can hear nothing in a place like this," and he leant against the wall, and thought and thought. And he had time enough to think, for days and nights passed and no one came near him, and when at last somebody did come, it was only to put away large boxes in a corner. So the tree was completely hidden from sight as if it had never existed. "It is winter now," thought the tree, "the ground is hard and covered with snow, so that people cannot plant me. I shall be sheltered here, I dare say, until spring comes. How thoughtful and kind everybody is to me! Still I wish this place were not so dark, as well as lonely, with not even a little hare to look at. How pleasant it was out in the forest while the snow lay on the ground, when the hare would run by, yes, and jump over me too, although I did not like it then. Oh! it is terribly lonely here."

"Squeak, squeak," said a little mouse, creeping cautiously towards the tree; then came another, and they both sniffed at the fir-tree and crept between the branches.

"Oh, it is very cold," said the little mouse, "or else we should be so comfortable here, shouldn't we, you old fir-tree?"

"I am not old," said the fir-tree; "there are many who are older than I am."

"Where do you come from? and what do you know?" asked the mice, who were full of curiosity. "Have you seen the most beautiful places in the world, and can you tell us all about them? and have you been in the storeroom, where cheeses lie on the shelf, and hams hang from the ceiling? One can run about on tallow candles there, and go in thin and come out fat."

"I know nothing of that place," said the fir-tree, "but I know the wood where the sun shines and the birds sing." And then the tree told the little mice all about its youth. They had never heard such an account in their lives; and after they had listened to it attentively, they said, "What a number of things you have seen! you must have been very happy."

"Happy!" exclaimed the fir-tree, and then as he reflected upon what he had been telling them, he said, "Ah, yes! after all, those were happy days." But when he went on and related all about Christmas-eve, and how he had been dressed up with cakes and lights, the mice said, "How happy you must have been, you old fir-tree!"

"I am not old at all," replied the tree, "I only came from the forest this winter; I am now checked in my growth."

"What splendid stories you can relate!" said the little mice. And the next night four other mice came with them to hear what the tree had to tell. The more he talked the more he remembered, and then he thought to himself, "Those were happy days, but they may come again. Humpty Dumpty fell downstairs, and yet he married the princess; perhaps I may marry a princess too." And the fir-tree thought of the pretty little birch-tree that grew in the forest, which was to him a real beautiful princess.

"Who is Humpty Dumpty?" asked the little mice. And then the tree related the whole story; he could remember every single word, and the little mice were so delighted with it, that they were ready to jump to the top of the tree. The next night a great many more mice made their appearance, and on Sunday two rats came with them; but they said, it was not a pretty story at all, and the little mice were very sorry, for it made them also think less of it.

"Do you know only one story?" asked the rats.

"Only one," replied the fir-tree; "I heard it on the happiest evening in my life; but I did not know I was so happy at the time."

"We think it is a very miserable story," said the rats. "Don't you know any story about bacon, or tallow in the storeroom?"

"No," replied the tree.

"Many thanks to you then," replied the rats, and they marched off.

The little mice also kept away after this, and the tree sighed, and said, "It was very pleasant when the merry little mice sat round me and listened while I talked. Now that is all past too.

However, I shall consider myself happy when some one comes to take me out of this place." But would this ever happen? Yes; one morning people came to clear out the garret, the boxes were packed away, and the tree was pulled out of the corner, and thrown roughly on the garret floor; then the servant dragged it out upon the staircase where the daylight shone. "Now life is beginning again," said the tree, rejoicing in the sunshine and fresh air. Then it was carried downstairs and taken into the courtyard so quickly, that it forgot to think of itself, and could only look about, there was so much to be seen. The court was close to a garden, where everything looked blooming. Fresh and fragrant roses hung over the little palings. The linden-trees were in blossom; while the swallows flew here and there, crying, "Twit, twit, twit, my mate is coming,"—but it was not the fir-tree they meant. "Now I shall live," cried the tree, joyfully spreading out its branches; but alas! they were all withered and yellow, and it lay in a corner amongst weeds and nettles. The star of gold paper still stuck in the top of the tree and glittered in the sunshine. In the same courtyard two of the merry children were playing who had danced round the tree at Christmas, and had been so happy. The youngest saw the gilded star, and ran and pulled it off the tree. "Look what is sticking to the ugly old fir-tree," said the child, treading on the branches till they crackled under his boots. And the tree saw all the fresh bright flowers in the garden, and then looked at itself, and wished it had remained in the dark corner of the garret. It thought of its fresh youth in the forest, of the merry Christmas evening, and of the little mice who had listened to the story of "Humpty Dumpty." "Past! past!" said the old tree. "Oh, had I but enjoyed myself while I could have done so! but now it is too late." Then a lad came and chopped the tree into small pieces, till a large bundle lay in a heap on the ground. The pieces were placed in a fire under the copper, and they quickly blazed up brightly, while the tree sighed so deeply that each sigh was like a little pistol-shot. Then the children, who were at play, came and seated themselves in front of the fire, and looked at it, and cried, "Pop, pop." But

at each "pop," which was a deep sigh, the tree was thinking of a summer day in the forest, or of some winter night there, when the stars shone brightly; and of Christmas evening, and of "Humpty Dumpty," the only story it had ever heard or knew



"THEY QUICKLY BLAZED UP BRIGHTLY."—*p.* 21.

how to relate, till at last it was consumed. The boys still played in the garden, and the youngest wore the golden star on his breast, with which the tree had been adorned during the happiest evening of its existence. Now all was past; the tree's life was past, and the story also,—for all stories must come to an end at last.

Little Tiny.

THERE was once a woman who wished very much to have a little child, but she could not obtain her wish. At last she went to a fairy, and said, "I should so very much like to have a little child; can you tell me where I can find one?"

"Oh, that can be easily managed," said the fairy. "Here is a barleycorn of a different kind to those which grow in the farmers fields, and which the chickens eat; put it into a flower-pot, and see what will happen."

"Thank you," said the woman, and she gave the fairy twelve shillings, which was the price of the barleycorn. Then she went home and planted it, and immediately there grew up a large handsome flower, something like a tulip in appearance, but with its leaves tightly closed as if it were still a bud. "It is a beautiful flower," said the woman, and she kissed the red and golden-coloured leaves, and while she did so the flower opened, and she could see that it was a real tulip. Within the flower, upon the green velvet stamens, sat a very delicate and graceful little maiden. She was scarcely half as long as a thumb, and they gave her the name of "Little Thumb," or Tiny, because she was so small. A walnut-shell, elegantly polished, served her for a cradle; her bed was formed of blue violet-leaves, with a rose-leaf for a counterpane. Here she slept at night, but during the day she amused herself on a table, where the woman had placed a plate full of water. Round this plate were wreaths of flowers with their stems in the water, and upon it floated a large tulip-leaf, which served Tiny for a boat. Here the little maiden sat and rowed herself from side to side, with two oars made of white horse-hair. It really was a very pretty sight. Tiny could, also, sing so softly and sweetly that nothing like her singing had ever before been heard. One night, while she lay in her pretty bed, a large, ugly, wet toad crept through a broken pane of glass in the window, and leaped right upon the table where Tiny lay sleeping under her rose-leaf quilt. "What a pretty little wife this would make for my son!" said the toad, and she took up the walnut-shell in which little Tiny lay asleep, and jumped through the window with it into the garden.

In the swampy margin of a broad stream in the garden lived the toad, with her son. He was uglier even than his mother, and when he saw the pretty little maiden in her elegant bed, he could only cry, "Croak, croak, croak."

"Don't speak so loud, or she will wake," said the toad, "and then she might run away, for she is as light as swan's down. We will place her on one of the water-lily leaves out in the stream; it will be like an island to her, she is so light and small, and then

she cannot escape; and, while she is away, we will make haste and prepare the state-room under the marsh, in which you are to live when you are married."

Far out in the stream grew a number of water-lilies, with broad green leaves, which seemed to float on the top of the water. The largest of these leaves appeared farther off than the rest, and the old toad swam out to it with the walnut-shell, in which little Tiny lay still asleep. The tiny little creature woke very early in the morning, and began to cry bitterly when she found where she was, for she could see nothing but water on every side of the large green leaf, and no way of reaching the land. Meanwhile the old toad was very busy under the marsh, decking her room with rushes and wild yellow flowers, to make it look pretty for her new daughter-in-law. Then she swam out with her ugly son to the leaf on which she had placed poor little Tiny. She wanted to fetch the pretty bed, that she might put it in the bridal chamber to be ready for her. The old toad bowed low to her in the water, and said, "Here is my son, he will be your husband, and you will live happily together in the marsh by the stream."

"Croak, croak, croak," was all her son could say for himself; so the toad took up the elegant little bed, and swam away with it, leaving Tiny all alone on the green leaf, where she sat and wept. She could not bear to think of living with the old toad, and having her ugly son for a husband. The little fishes, who swam about in the water beneath, had seen the toad, and had heard what she said, so they lifted their heads above the water to look at the little maiden. As soon as they caught sight of her, they saw she was very pretty, and it made them sorry to think that she must go and live with the ugly toads. "No, it must never be!" So they assembled together in the water, round the green stalk which held the leaf on which the little maiden stood, and gnawed it away at the root with their teeth. Then the leaf floated down the stream, carrying Tiny far away, out of reach of land.

Tiny sailed past many towns, and the little birds in the bushes saw her, and sang, "What a lovely little creature!" so the leaf swam away with her farther and farther, till it brought her to

other lands. A graceful little white butterfly constantly fluttered round her, and at last alighted on the leaf. Tiny pleased him, and she was glad of it, for now the toad could not possibly reach her, and the country through which she sailed was beautiful, and the sun shone upon the water, till it glittered like liquid gold. She took off her girdle and tied one end of it round the butterfly, and the other end of the ribbon she fastened to the leaf, which now glided on much faster than ever, taking little Tiny with it as she stood. Presently a large cockchafer flew by; the moment he caught sight of her, he seized her round her delicate waist with his claws, and flew with her into a tree. The green leaf floated away on the brook, and the butterfly flew with it, for he was fastened to it, and could not get away.

Oh, how frightened little Tiny felt when the cockchafer flew with her to the tree! But especially was she sorry for the beautiful white butterfly which she had fastened to the leaf, for if he could not free himself he would die of hunger. But the cockchafer did not trouble himself at all about the matter. He seated himself by her side on a large green leaf, gave her some honey from the flowers to eat, and told her she was very pretty, though not in the least like a cockchafer. After a time, all the cockchafers who lived in the tree came to visit her. They stared at Tiny, and then the young lady cockchafers turned up their feelers, and said, "She has only two legs! how ugly that looks." "She has no feelers," said another. "Her waist is quite slim. Pooh! she is like a human being."

"Oh! she is ugly," said all the lady cockchafers, although Tiny was very pretty. Then the cockchafer who had run away with her, believed all the others when they said she was ugly, and would have nothing more to say to her, and told her she might go where she liked. Then he flew down with her from the tree, and placed her on a daisy, and she wept at the thought that she was so ugly that even the cockchafers would have nothing to say to her. And all the while she was really the loveliest creature that one could imagine, and as tender and delicate as a beautiful rose-leaf. During the whole summer poor little Tiny lived quite alone



"DRANK DEW FROM THEIR LEAVES EVERY MORNING."

in the wide forest. She wove herself a bed with blades of grass, and hung it up under a broad leaf, to protect herself from the rain. She sucked the honey from the flowers for food, and drank the dew from their leaves every morning. So passed away the summer and the autumn, and then came the winter, — the long, cold winter. All the birds who had sung to her so sweetly were flown away, and the trees and the flowers had withered. The large clover leaf, under the shelter of which she had lived, was now rolled together and shrivelled up, nothing remained but a yellow withered stalk. She felt dreadfully cold, for her clothes were torn, and she was herself so frail and delicate, that poor little Tiny was nearly frozen to death. It began to snow too; and the snow-flakes, as they fell upon her, were like a whole shovelful falling upon one of us, for we are tall, but she was only

an inch high. Then she wrapped herself up in a dry leaf, but it cracked in the middle, and could not keep her warm, and she shivered with cold. Near the wood in which she had been living, lay a large corn-field, but the corn had been cut a long time; nothing remained but the bare dry stubble standing up out of the frozen ground. It was to her like struggling through a large wood. Oh! how she shivered with the cold. She came at last to the door of a field-mouse, who had a little den under the corn-stubble. There dwelt the field-mouse in warmth and comfort, with a whole roomful of corn, a kitchen, and a beautiful dining-room. Poor little Tiny stood before the door just like a little beggar-girl, and begged for a small piece of barleycorn, for she had been without a morsel to eat for two days.

"You poor little creature," said the field-mouse, who was really a good old field-mouse, "come into my warm room and dine with me." She was very pleased with Tiny, so she said, "You are quite welcome to stay with me all the winter, if you like; but you must keep my rooms clean and neat, and tell me stories, for I shall like to hear them very much." And Tiny did all the field-mouse asked her, and found herself very comfortable.

"We shall have a visitor soon," said the field-mouse one day; "my neighbour pays me a visit once a week. He is better off than I am; he has large rooms, and wears a beautiful black velvet coat. If you could only have him for a husband, you would be well provided for indeed. But he is blind, so you must tell him some of your prettiest stories."

But Tiny did not feel at all interested about this neighbour, for he was a mole. However, he came and paid his visit, dressed in his black velvet coat.

"He is very rich and learned, and his house is twenty times larger than mine," said the field-mouse.

He was rich and learned, no doubt, but he always spoke slightingly of the sun and the pretty flowers, because he had never seen them. Tiny was obliged to sing to him, "Lady-bird, lady-bird, fly away home," and many other pretty songs. And the mole fell in love with her because she had such a sweet voice; but he said

nothing yet, for he was very cautious. A short time before, the mole had dug a long passage under the earth, which led from the dwelling of the field-mouse to his own, and here she had permission to walk with Tiny, whenever she liked. But he warned them not to be alarmed at the sight of a dead bird which lay in the passage. It was a perfect bird, with a beak and feathers, and could not have been dead long, and was lying just where the mole had made his passage. The mole took a piece of phosphorescent wood in his mouth, and it glittered like fire in the dark; then he went before them to light them through the long, dark passage. When they came to the spot where lay the dead bird, the mole pushed his broad nose through the ceiling, the earth gave way, so that there was a large hole, and the daylight shone into the passage. In the middle of the floor lay a dead swallow, his beautiful wings folded close to his sides, his feet and his head drawn up under his feathers; the poor bird had evidently died of the cold. It made little Tiny very sad to see it, she did so love the little birds; all the summer they had sung and twittered for her so beautifully. But the mole pushed it aside with his crooked legs, and said, "He will sing no more now. How miserable it must be to be born a little bird! I am thankful that none of my children will ever be birds, for they can do nothing but cry, 'Tweet, tweet,' and always die of hunger in the winter."

"Yes, you may well say that, as a clever mole!" exclaimed the field-mouse. "What is the use of his twittering, for when winter comes he must either starve or be frozen to death. Still birds are very high bred."

Tiny said nothing; but when the two others had turned their backs on the bird, she stooped down and stroked aside the soft feathers which covered the head, and kissed the closed eyelids. "Perhaps this was the one who sang to me so sweetly in the summer," she said; "and how much pleasure it gave me, you dear, pretty bird."

The mole now stopped up the hole through which the daylight shone, and then accompanied the ladies home. But during the night Tiny could not sleep; so she got out of bed and wove a

large, beautiful carpet of hay ; then she carried it to the dead bird, and spread it over him, with some down from the flowers which she had found in the field-mouse's room. It was as soft as wool, and she spread some of it on each side of the bird, so that he might lie warmly in the cold earth. "Farewell, you pretty little bird," said she, "farewell ; thank you for your delightful singing during the summer, when all the trees were green, and the warm sun shone upon us." Then she laid her head on the bird's breast, but she was alarmed immediately, for it seemed as if something inside the bird went "thump, thump." It was the bird's heart ; he was not really dead, only benumbed with the cold, and the warmth had restored him to life. In autumn, all the swallows fly away into warm countries, but if one happens to linger, the cold seizes it, it becomes frozen, and falls down as if dead ; it remains where it fell, and the cold snow covers it. Tiny trembled very much ; she was quite frightened, for the bird was large, a great deal larger than herself,—she was only an inch high. But she took courage, laid the wool more thickly over the poor swallow, and then brought a leaf which she had used for her own counterpane, and laid it over the head of the poor bird. The next night she again stole out to see him. He was alive but very weak ; he could only open his eyes for a moment to look at Tiny, who stood by holding a piece of decayed wood in her hand, for she had no other lantern. "Thank you, pretty little maiden," said the sick swallow ; "I have been so nicely warmed, that I shall soon regain my strength, and be able to fly about again in the warm sunshine."

"Oh," said she, "it is cold out of doors now ; it snows and freezes. Stay in your warm bed ; I will take care of you."

Then she brought the swallow some water in a flower-leaf, and, after he had drank, he told her that he had wounded one of his wings in a thorn-bush, and could not fly as fast as the others, who were soon far away on their journey to warm countries. Then at last he had fallen to the earth, and could remember no more, nor how he came to be where she had found him. The whole winter the swallow remained underground, and Tiny nursed him with care and love. Neither the mole nor the field-mouse knew any-

thing about it, for they did not like swallows. Very soon the spring time came, and the sun warmed the earth. Then the swallow bade farewell to Tiny, and she opened the hole in the ceiling which the mole had made. The sun shone in upon them so beautifully, that the swallow asked her if she would go with him ; she could sit on his back, he said, and he would fly away with her into the green woods. But Tiny knew it would make the field-mouse very grieved if she left her in that manner, so she said, "No, I cannot."

"Farewell, then, farewell, you good, pretty little maiden," said the swallow ; and he flew out into the sunshine.

Tiny looked after him, and the tears rose in her eyes. She was very fond of the poor swallow.

"Tweet, tweet," sang the bird, as he flew out into the green woods, and Tiny felt very sad. She was not allowed to go out into the warm sunshine. The corn which had been sown in the field over the house of the field-mouse had grown up high into the air, and formed a thick wood to Tiny, who was only an inch in height.

"You are going to be married, Tiny," said the field-mouse. "My neighbour has asked for you. What good fortune for a poor child like you! Now we will prepare your wedding clothes. They must be both woollen and linen. Nothing must be wanting when you are the mole's wife."

Tiny had to turn the spindle, and the field-mouse hired four spiders, who were to weave day and night. Every evening the mole visited her, and was continually speaking of the time when the summer would be over. Then he would keep his wedding-day with Tiny ; but now the heat of the sun was so great that it burned the earth, and made it quite hard, like a stone. As soon as the summer was over, the wedding should take place. But Tiny was not at all pleased ; for she did not like the tiresome mole. Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it went down, she would creep out at the door, and as the wind blew aside the ears of corn, so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how beautiful and bright it seemed out there, and wished so much to see her dear swallow again. But he never returned ; for by this time he had flown far away into the lovely green forest.

When autumn arrived, Tiny had her outfit quite ready; and the field-mouse said to her, "In four weeks the wedding must take place."

Then Tiny wept, and said she would not marry the disagreeable mole.

"Nonsense," replied the field-mouse. "Now don't be obstinate, or I shall bite you with my white teeth. He is a very handsome mole; the queen herself does not wear more beautiful velvets and furs. His kitchens and cellars are quite full. You ought to be thankful for such good fortune."

So the wedding-day was fixed, on which the mole was to fetch Tiny away to live with him, deep under the earth, and never again to see the warm sun, because *he* did not like it. The poor child was very unhappy at the thought of saying farewell to the beautiful sun, and as the field-mouse had given her permission to stand at the door, she went to look at it once more.

"Farewell, bright sun," she cried, stretching out her arm towards it; and then she walked a short distance from the house; for the corn had been cut, and only the dry stubble remained in the fields. "Farewell, farewell," she repeated, twining her arm round a little red flower that grew just by her side. "Greet the little swallow from me, if you should see him again."

"Tweet, tweet," sounded over her head suddenly. She looked up, and there was the swallow himself flying close by. As soon as he spied Tiny, he was delighted; and then she told him how unwilling she felt to marry the ugly mole, and to live always beneath the earth, and never to see the bright sun any more. And as she told him, she wept.

"Cold winter is coming," said the swallow, "and I am going to fly away into warmer countries. Will you go with me? You can sit on my back, and fasten yourself on with your sash. Then we can fly away from the ugly mole and his gloomy rooms,—far away, over the mountains, into warmer countries, where the sun shines more brightly than here; where it is always summer, and the flowers bloom in greater beauty. Fly now with me, dear little Tiny; you saved my life when I lay frozen in that dark, dreary passage."

"Yes, I will go with you," said Tiny; and she seated herself

on the bird's back, with her feet on his outstretched wings, and tied her girdle to one of his strongest feathers.

Then the swallow rose in the air, and flew over forest and over sea, high above the highest mountains, covered with eternal snow. Tiny would have been frozen in the cold air, but she crept under the bird's warm feathers, keeping her little head uncovered, so that she might admire the beautiful lands over which they passed. At length they reached the warm countries, where the sun shines brightly, and the sky seems so much higher above the earth. Here, on the hedges, and by the wayside, grew purple, green, and white grapes ; lemons and oranges hung from trees in the woods ; and the air was fragrant with myrtles and orange blossoms. Beautiful children ran along the country lanes, playing with large gay butterflies ; and as the swallow flew farther and farther, every place appeared still more lovely.

At last they came to a blue lake, and by the side of it, shaded by trees of the deepest green, stood a palace of dazzling white marble, built in the olden times. Vines clustered round its lofty pillars, and at the top were many swallows' nests, and one of these was the home of the swallow who carried Tiny.

"This is my house," said the swallow ; "but it would not do for you to live there—you would not be comfortable. You must choose for yourself one of those lovely flowers, and I will put you down upon it, and then you shall have everything that you can wish to make you happy."

"That will be delightful," she said, and clapped her little hands for joy.

A large marble pillar lay on the ground, which, in falling, had been broken into three pieces. Between these pieces grew the most beautiful large white flowers ; so the swallow flew down with Tiny, and placed her on one of the broad leaves. But how surprised she was to see, in the middle of the flower, a tiny little man, as white and transparent as if he had been made of crystal ! He had a gold crown on his head, and delicate wings at his shoulders, and was not much larger than Tiny herself. He was the angel of the flower ; for a tiny man and a tiny woman dwell in every flower ; and this was the king of them all.

"Oh, how beautiful he is!" whispered Tiny to the swallow.

The little prince was at first quite frightened at the bird, who was like a giant, compared to such a delicate little creature as himself; but when he saw Tiny, he was delighted, and thought her the prettiest little maiden he had ever seen. He took the gold crown from his head, and placed it on hers, and asked her name, and if she would be his wife, and queen over all the flowers.

This certainly was a very different sort of husband to the son of the toad, or the mole, with his black velvet and fur; so she said, "Yes," to the handsome prince. Then all the flowers opened, and out of each came a little lady or a tiny lord, all so pretty it was quite a pleasure to look at them. Each of them brought Tiny a present; but the best gift was a pair of beautiful wings, which had belonged to a large white fly, and they fastened them to Tiny's shoulders, so that she might fly from flower to flower. Then there was much rejoicing, and the little swallow, who sat above them, in his nest, was asked to sing a wedding song, which he did as well as he could; but in his heart he felt sad, for he was very fond of Tiny, and would have liked never to part from her again.

"You must not be called Tiny any more," said the spirit of the flowers to her. "It is an ugly name, and you are so very pretty. We will call you Maia."

"Farewell, farewell," said the swallow, with a heavy heart, as he left the warm countries, to fly back into Denmark. There he had a nest over the window of a house in which dwelt the writer of fairy tales. The swallow sang, "Tweet, tweet," and from his song came the whole story.



The Daisy.

Now listen. In the country, close by the roadside, stood a pleasant house; you have seen one like it, no doubt, very often. In front, lay a little garden enclosed in palings, and full of blooming flowers. Near the hedge, in the soft green grass, grew a little daisy. The sun shone as brightly and warmly upon her as upon the large and beautiful garden flowers, so the daisy grew from hour to hour. Every morning she unfolded her little white petals, like shining rays round the little golden sun in the centre of the flower. She never thought of being unseen down in the grass, or that she was only a poor, insignificant flower. She felt too happy to care for that, so she turned towards the warm sun, looked up to the blue sky, and listened to the lark singing high in the air. One day, the little flower was as joyful as if it had been a great holiday, and yet it was only Monday. All the children were at school, and while they sat on their forms learning their lessons, she, on her little stem, learnt also from the warm sun and from everything around her, how good God is, and she was glad to hear the lark in his pleasant song express exactly her own feelings. And the daisy admired the happy bird who could warble so sweetly and fly so high; but she was not sorrowful from regret at her own inability to do the same. "I can see and hear," thought she; "the sun shines upon me, and the wind kisses me: what else do I need to make me happy?" Within the palings grew a number of garden flowers, who appeared more proud and conceited in proportion as they were scentless. The peonies considered it a grand thing to be so large, and puffed themselves out to be larger than the roses. The tulips knew that they were marked with beautiful colours, and held themselves bolt upright, that they might be seen more plainly. They did not notice the little daisy outside, but she looked at them and thought, "How rich and beautiful they are! No wonder the pretty bird flies down to visit them. How glad I am that I grow so near them, that I may admire their beautiful appearance." Just at this moment, the lark flew down, crying

"Tweet," but he did not go near the peonies and tulips; he hopped into the grass near the lowly daisy. She trembled for joy, and hardly knew what to think. The little bird hopped round the daisy, singing, "Oh what sweet soft grass, and what a lovely little flower, with gold in its heart and silver on its dress." For the yellow centre in the daisy looked like gold, and the leaves around were glittering white, like silver. How happy the little daisy felt, no one can describe—the bird kissed it with his beak, sang to it, and then flew up again into the blue air above. It was, at least, a quarter of an hour before the daisy could recover herself. Half ashamed, yet happy in herself, she glanced at the other flowers; they must have seen the honour she had received, and would understand her delight and pleasure. But the tulips looked prouder than ever; indeed, they were evidently quite vexed about it. And the peonies were disgusted, and, could they have spoken, the poor little daisy would have no doubt received a good scolding. She could see they were all out of temper, and it made her very sorry.

At this moment there came into the garden a girl, with a large sharp knife, which glittered in her hand. She went straight up to the tulips and cut down several of them, one after another.

"Oh dear," sighed the daisy, "how shocking! It is all over with them now." The girl carried the tulips away, and the daisy felt very glad to grow outside in the grass, and to be only a poor little flower. When the sun set, she folded up her leaves and went to sleep, and dreamt the whole night long of the warm sun and the pretty little bird. The next morning, when the flower joyfully stretched out its white leaves once more to the warm air and the light, she recognised the voice of the bird, but his song sounded mournful and sad. Alas! he had good reason to be sad—he had been caught and made a prisoner in a cage that hung close by the open window. He sang of the happy time when he could fly in the air joyous and free; of the young green corn in the fields from which he would spring higher and higher to sing his glorious song, and now he was a prisoner in a cage. The little daisy wished very much that she could help him. But what could she

do? In her anxiety she forgot all the beautiful things around her, the warm sunshine and her own pretty shining white leaves. Alas! she could think of nothing but the captive bird, and her own inability to help him. Two boys came into the garden; one of them carried a large sharp knife in his hand like the one with which the girl had cut down the tulips. They went straight up to the little daisy, who could not think what they were going to do. "We can cut out a nice piece of turf for the lark here," said one of the boys, and he began to cut a square piece round the daisy so that she stood just in the centre. "Pull up the flower," said the other boy, and the daisy trembled with fear, for to pluck it up would destroy its life, and it wished so much to live and to be taken to the captive lark, in his cage, on the piece of turf. "No, let it stay," said the boy, "it looks so pretty." So the daisy remained, and was put with the turf in the lark's cage. The poor bird was complaining loudly about his lost freedom, and beat his wings against the iron bars of his cage. The little daisy could not speak nor utter one word to console him, or she would gladly have done so. The whole morning passed in this manner.

"Here is no water," said the captive lark; "they are all gone out and have forgotten to give me a drop of water to drink. My throat is hot and dry; I feel as if I had fire and ice within me, and the air is so heavy. Alas! I must die; I must bid farewell to the warm sunshine, the fresh green, and all the beautiful things which God has created." And then he thrust his beak into the cool turf to refresh himself a little with the fresh grass, and his eye fell on the daisy; then the bird nodded to it and kissed it with his beak, and said, "You also will wither here, you poor little flower! They have given you to me with the little patch of green grass on which you grow, in exchange for the whole world which was mine out there. Each little blade of grass is to me as a great tree, and each of your white leaves a flower. Alas! you only show me how much I have lost." "Oh, if I could only comfort him!" thought the daisy, but she could not move a leaf; yet the perfume from her leaves was stronger than is usual in these flowers, and the bird noticed it, and though he was fainting with thirst,

and in his pain pulled up the green blades of grass, he did not touch the flower. The evening came, and yet no one appeared to bring the bird a drop of water; then he stretched out his pretty wings and shook convulsively, he could only sing, "Tweet, tweet," in a weak, mournful tone. His little head bent down towards the flower; the bird's heart was broken with want and pining. Then the flower could not fold its leaves as it had done the evening before, to sleep, but it dropped sick and sorrowful towards the earth. Not till morning did the boys come, and when they found the bird dead, they wept many and bitter tears; they dug a pretty grave for him, and adorned it with leaves of flowers. The bird's lifeless body was placed in a smart red box, and he was buried with great honour. Poor bird! while he was alive and could sing, they forgot him and allowed him to sit in his cage and suffer want, but now he was dead, they mourned for him with many tears, and buried him in royal state. But the turf with the daisy on it was thrown out into the dusty road. No one thought of the little flower which had felt more for the poor bird than any one else, and would have been so glad to help and console him, if she had been able to do so.

The Brave Tin Soldier.

THERE were once five-and-twenty tin soldiers, who were all brothers, for they had been made out of the same old tin spoon. They shouldered arms and looked straight before them, and wore a splendid uniform, red and blue. The first thing in the world they ever heard were the words, "Tin soldiers!" uttered by a little boy, who clapped his hands with delight when the lid of the box, in which they lay, was taken off. They were given him for a birthday present, and he stood at the table to set them up. The soldiers were all exactly alike, excepting one, who had only one leg; he had been left to the last, and then there was not enough of the melted tin to finish him, so they made him to stand firmly on one leg, and this caused him to be very remarkable.

The table on which the tin soldiers stood was covered with other playthings, but the most attractive to the eye was a pretty little paper castle. Through the small windows the rooms could be seen. In front of the castle a number of little trees surrounded a piece of looking-glass, which was intended to represent a transparent lake. Swans, made of wax, swam on the lake, and were reflected in it. All this was very pretty, but the prettiest of all was a tiny little lady, who stood at the open door of the castle; she, also, was made of paper, and she wore a dress of clear muslin, with a narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders just like a scarf. In front of this was fixed a glittering tinsel rose, as large as her whole face. The little lady was a dancer, and she stretched out both her arms, and raised one of her legs so high, that the tin soldier could not see it at all, and he thought that she, like himself, had only one leg. "That is the wife for me," he thought; "but she is too grand, and lives in a castle, while I have only a box to live in, five-and-twenty of us altogether, that is no place for her. Still I must try and make her acquaintance." Then he laid himself at full length on the table behind a snuff-box that stood upon it, so that he could peep at the little delicate lady, who continued to stand on one leg without losing her balance. When evening came, the other tin soldiers were all placed in the box, and the people of the house went to bed. Then the playthings began to have their own games together, to pay visits, to have sham fights, and to give balls. The tin soldiers rattled in their box; they wanted to get out and join the amusements, but they could not open the lid. The nut-crackers played at leap-frog, and the pencil jumped about the table. There was such a noise that the canary woke up and began to talk, and in poetry too. Only the tin soldier and the dancer remained in their places. She stood on tiptoe, with her arms stretched out, as firmly as he did on his one leg. He never took his eyes from her for even a moment. The clock struck twelve, and, with a bounce, up sprang the lid of the snuff-box; but, instead of snuff, there jumped up a little black goblin; for the snuff-box was a toy puzzle.

"Tin soldier," said the goblin, "don't wish for what does not belong to you."

But the tin soldier pretended not to hear.

"Very well; wait till to-morrow, then," said the goblin.

When the children came in the next morning, they placed the tin soldier in the window. Now, whether it was the goblin who did it, or the draught, is not known, but the window flew open, and out fell the tin soldier, heels over head, from the third story, into the street beneath. It was a terrible fall; for he came head downwards, his helmet and his bayonet stuck in between the flag-stones, and his one leg up in the air. The servant-maid and the little boy went downstairs directly to look for him; but he was nowhere to be seen, although once they nearly trod upon him. If he had called out, "Here I am," it would have been all right; but he was too proud to cry out for help while he wore a uniform.

Presently it began to rain, and the drops fell faster and faster, till there was a heavy shower. When it was over, two boys happened to pass by, and one of them said, "Look, there is a tin soldier. He ought to have a boat to sail in."

So they made a boat out of a newspaper, and placed the tin soldier in it, and sent him sailing down the gutter, while the two boys ran by the side of it, and clapped their hands. Good gracious, what large waves arose in that gutter! and how fast the stream rolled on! for the rain had been very heavy. The paper boat rocked up and down, and turned itself round sometimes so quickly that the tin soldier trembled; yet he remained firm; his countenance did not change; he looked straight before him, and shouldered his musket. Suddenly the boat shot under a bridge which formed part of a drain, and then it was as dark as the tin soldier's box.

"Where am I going now?" thought he. "This is the black goblin's fault, I am sure. Ah, well, if the little lady were only here with me in the boat, I should not care for any darkness."

Suddenly there appeared a great water-rat, who lived in the drain.

"Have you a passport?" asked the rat; "give it to me at

once." But the tin soldier remained silent and held his musket tighter than ever. The boat sailed on, and the rat followed it. How he did gnash his teeth and cry out to the bits of wood and straw, "Stop him, stop him; he has not paid toll, and has not shown his pass!" But the stream rushed on stronger and stronger. The tin soldier could already see daylight shining where the



"AND SENT HIM SAILING DOWN THE GUTTER."—*p.* 39.

arch ended. Then he heard a roaring sound quite terrible enough to frighten the bravest man. At the end of the tunnel the drain fell into a large canal over a steep place, which made it as dangerous for him as a waterfall would be to us. He was too close to it to stop, so the boat rushed on, and the poor tin soldier could only hold himself as stiffly as possible, without moving an eyelid, to show that he was not afraid. The boat whirled round

three or four times, and then filled with water to the very edge ; nothing could save it from sinking. He now stood up to his neck in water, while deeper and deeper sank the boat, and the paper became soft and loose with the wet, till at last the water closed over the soldier's head. He thought of the elegant little dancer whom he should never see again, and the words of the song sounded in his ears—

"Farewell warrior! ever brave,
Drifting onward to thy grave."

Then the paper boat fell to pieces, and the soldier sank into the water and immediately afterwards was swallowed up by a great fish. Oh, how dark it was inside the fish! a great deal darker than in the tunnel, and narrower too, but the tin soldier continued firm, and lay at full length, shouldering his musket. The fish swam to and fro, making the most wonderful movements, but at last he became quite still. After a while, a flash of lightning seemed to pass through him, and then the daylight appeared, and a voice cried out, "I declare, here is the tin soldier!" The fish had been caught, taken to the market and sold to the cook, who took him into the kitchen and cut him open with a large knife. She picked up the soldier and held him by the waist between her finger and thumb, and carried him into the room. They were all anxious to see this wonderful soldier who had travelled about inside a fish ; but he was not at all proud. They placed him on the table, and—how many curious things do happen in the world!—there he was in the very same room from the window of which he had fallen, there were the same children, the same playthings standing on the table, and the pretty castle with the elegant little dancer at the door ; she still balanced herself on one leg, and held up the other, so she was as firm as himself. It touched the tin soldier so much to see her that he almost wept tin tears, but he kept them back. He only looked at her, and they both remained silent. Presently one of the little boys took up the tin soldier, and threw him into the stove. He had no reason for doing so, therefore it must have been the fault of the black goblin who lived in the snuff-box. The flames lighted up the tin soldier,

as he stood, the heat was very terrible, but whether it proceeded from the real fire or from the fire of love he could not tell. Then he could see that the bright colours were faded from his uniform, but whether they had been washed off during his journey, or from the effects of his sorrow, no one could say. He looked at the little lady, and she looked at him. He felt himself melting away, but he still remained firm with his gun on his shoulder. Suddenly the door of the room flew open, and the draught of air caught up the little dancer; she fluttered like a sylph right into the stove by the side of the tin soldier, and was instantly in flames and was gone. The tin soldier melted down into a lump, and the next morning, when the maid-servant took the ashes out of the stove, she found him in the shape of a little tin heart. But of the little dancer nothing remained but the tinsel rose, which was burnt to a cinder.

The Ugly Duckling.

It was lovely summer weather in the country, and the golden corn, the green oats, and the haystacks piled up in the meadows looked beautiful. The stork walking about on his long red legs chattered in the Egyptian language, which he had learnt from his mother. The corn-fields and meadows were surrounded by large forests, in the midst of which were deep pools. It was, indeed, delightful to walk about in the country. In a sunny spot stood a pleasant old farm-house close by a deep river, and from the house down to the water-side grew great burdock leaves, so high, that under the tallest of them a little child could stand upright. The spot was as wild as the centre of a thick wood. In this snug retreat sat a duck on her nest, watching for her young brood to hatch; she was beginning to get tired of her task, for the little ones were a long time coming out of their shells, and she seldom had any visitors. The other ducks liked much better to swim about in the river than to climb the slippery banks, and sit under a burdock leaf, to have a gossip with her. At length one shell

cracked, and then another, and from each egg came a living creature that lifted its head and cried, "Peep, peep." "Quack, quack," said the mother, and then they all quacked as well as they could, and looked about them on every side at the large green leaves. Their mother allowed them to look as much as they liked, because green is good for the eyes. "How large the world is!" said the young ducks, when they found how much more room they now had than while they were inside the egg-shell. "Do you imagine this is the whole world?" asked the mother. "Wait till you have seen the garden; it stretches far beyond that to the parson's field, but I have never ventured to such a distance. Are you all out?" she continued, rising. "No, I declare, the largest egg lies there still. I wonder how long this is to last, I am quite tired of it;" and she seated herself again on the nest.

"Well, how are you getting on?" asked an old duck, who paid her a visit.

"One egg is not hatched yet," said the duck; "it will not break. But just look at all the others, are they not the prettiest little ducklings you ever saw? They are the image of their father, who is so unkind, he never comes to see me."

"Let me see the egg that will not break," said the old duck; "I have no doubt it is a turkey's egg. I was persuaded to hatch some once, and after all my care and trouble with the young ones, they were afraid of the water. I quacked and clucked, but all to no purpose. I could not get them to venture in. Let me look at the egg. Yes, that is a turkey's egg; take my advice, leave it where it is, and teach the other children to swim."

"I think I will sit on it a little while longer," said the duck; "as I have sat so long already, a few days will be nothing."

"Please yourself," said the old duck, and she went away.

At last the large egg broke, and a young one crept forth, crying, "Peep, peep." It was very large and ugly. The duck stared at it, and exclaimed, "It is very large, and not at all like the others. I wonder if it really is a turkey? We shall soon find it out, however, when we go to the water. It must go in, if I have to push it in myself."

On the next day the weather was delightful, and the sun shone brightly on the green burdock leaves, so the mother duck took her young brood down to the water, and jumped in with a splash. "Quack, quack," cried she, and one after another the little ducklings jumped in. The water closed over their heads, but they came up again in an instant, and swam about quite prettily with their legs paddling under them as easily as possible, and the ugly duckling was also in the water swimming with them.

"Oh," said the mother, "that is not a turkey; how well he uses his legs, and how upright he holds himself! He is my own child, and he is not so very ugly after all if you look at him properly. Quack, quack! come with me now, I will take you into grand society, and introduce you to the farmyard, but you must keep close to me or you may be trodden upon; and, above all, beware of the cat."

When they reached the farmyard, there was a great disturbance; two families were fighting for an eel's head, which, after all, was carried off by the cat. "See, children, that is the way of the world," said the mother duck, whetting her beak, for she would have liked the eel's head herself. "Come, now, use your legs, and let me see how well you can behave. You must bow your heads prettily to that old duck yonder; she is the highest born of them all, and has Spanish blood, therefore she is well off. Don't you see she has a red rag tied to her leg, which is something very grand, and a great honour for a duck; it shows that every one is anxious not to lose her, as she can be recognised both by man and beast. Come, now, don't turn in your toes; a well-bred duckling spreads his feet wide apart, just like his father and mother, in this way. Now bend your neck, and say 'quack.'"

The ducklings did as they were bid, but the other ducks stared, and said, "Look, here comes another brood, as if there were not enough of us already! and what a queer-looking object one of them is; we don't want him here," and then one flew out and bit him in the neck.

"Let him alone," said the mother; "he is not doing any harm."

"Yes, but he is so big and ugly," said the spiteful duck, "and therefore must be turned out."

"The others are very pretty children," said the old duck with the rag on her leg, "all but that one; I wish his mother could improve him a little."

"That is impossible, your grace," replied the mother; "he is not pretty; but he has a very good disposition, and swims as well or even better than the others. I think he will grow up pretty, and perhaps be smaller; he has remained too long in the egg, and therefore his figure is not properly formed;" and then she stroked his neck and smoothed the feathers, saying, "It is a drake, and therefore not of so much consequence. I think he will grow up strong, and able to take care of himself."

"The other ducklings are graceful enough," said the old duck. "Now make yourself at home, and if you find an eel's head, you can bring it to me."

And so they made themselves comfortable; but the poor duckling, who had crept out of his shell last of all, and looked so ugly, was bitten and pushed and made fun of, not only by the ducks, but by all the poultry. "He is too big," they all said, and the turkey cock, who had been born into the world with spurs, and fancied himself really an emperor, puffed himself out like a vessel in full sail, and flew at the duckling, and became quite red in the head with passion, so that the poor little thing did not know where to go, and was quite miserable because he was so ugly and laughed at by the whole farmyard. So it went on from day to day till it got worse and worse. The poor duckling was driven about by every one; even his brothers and sisters were unkind to him, and would say, "Ah, you ugly creature, I wish the cat would get you," and his mother said she wished he had never been born. The ducks pecked him, the chickens beat him, and the girl who fed the poultry kicked him with her feet. So at last he ran away, frightening the little birds in the hedge as he flew over the palings.

"They are afraid of me, because I am so ugly," he said. So he closed his eyes, and flew still farther, until he came out on a

large moor, inhabited by wild ducks. Here he remained the whole night, feeling very tired and sorrowful.

In the morning, when the wild ducks rose in the air, they stared at their new comrade. "What sort of a duck are you?" they all said, coming round him.

He bowed to them, and was as polite as he could be, but he did not reply to their question. "You are exceedingly ugly," said the wild ducks, "but that will not matter if you do not want to marry one of our family."

Poor thing! he had no thoughts of marriage; all he wanted was permission to lie among the rushes, and drink some of the water on the moor. After he had been on the moor two days, there came two wild geese, or rather goslings, for they had not been out of the egg long, and were very saucy. "Listen, friend," said one of them to the duckling, "you are so ugly, that we like you very well. Will you go with us, and become a bird of passage? Not far from here is another moor, in which there are some pretty wild geese, all unmarried. It is a chance for you to get a wife; you may be lucky, ugly as you are."

"Pop, pop," sounded in the air, and the two wild geese fell dead among the rushes, and the water was tinged with blood. "Pop, pop," echoed far and wide in the distance, and whole flocks of wild geese rose up from the rushes. The sound continued from every direction, for the sportsmen surrounded the moor, and some were even seated on branches of trees, overlooking the rushes. The blue smoke from the guns rose like clouds over the dark trees, and as it floated away across the water, a number of sporting dogs bounded in among the rushes, which bent beneath them wherever they went. How they terrified the poor duckling! He turned away his head to hide it under his wing, and at the same moment a large terrible dog passed quite near him. His jaws were open, his tongue hung from his mouth, and his eyes glared fearfully. He thrust his nose close to the duckling, showing his sharp teeth, and then "splash, splash," he went into the water without touching him. "Oh," sighed the duckling, "how thankful I am for being so ugly! even a dog will not bite me."

And so he lay quite still, while the shot rattled through the rushes, and gun after gun was fired over him. It was late in the day before all became quiet, but even then the poor young thing did not dare to move. He waited quietly for several hours, and then, after looking carefully around him, hastened away from the moor as fast as he could. He ran over field and meadow till a storm arose, and he could hardly struggle against it. Towards evening, he reached a poor little cottage that seemed ready to fall, and only remained standing because it could not decide on which side to fall first. The storm continued so violent, that the duckling could go no farther; he sat down by the cottage, and then he noticed that the door was not quite closed in consequence of one of the hinges having given way. There was therefore a narrow opening near the bottom large enough for him to slip through, which he did very quietly, and got a shelter for the night. A woman, a tom cat, and a hen lived in this cottage. The tom cat, whom his mistress called, "My little son," was a great favourite; he could raise his back, and purr, and could even throw out sparks from his fur if it were stroked the wrong way. The hen had very short legs, so she was called "Chickie short legs." She laid good eggs, and her mistress loved her as if she had been her own child. In the morning, the strange visitor was discovered, and the tom cat began to purr, and the hen to cluck.

"What is that noise about?" said the old woman, looking round the room, but her sight was not very good; therefore, when she saw the duckling she thought it must be a fat duck, that had strayed from home. "Oh, what a prize!" she exclaimed, "I hope it is not a drake, for then I shall have some duck's eggs. I must wait and see." So the duckling was allowed to remain on trial for three weeks, but there were no eggs. Now, the tom cat was the master of the house, and the hen was mistress, and they always said, "We and the world," for they believed themselves to be half the world, and the better half too. The duckling thought that others might hold a different opinion on the subject, but the hen would not listen to such doubts. "Can you lay eggs?" she asked. "No." "Then have the goodness to hold your tongue."

"Can you raise your back, or purr, or throw out sparks?" said the tom cat. "No." "Then you have no right to express an opinion when sensible people are speaking." So the duckling sat in a corner, feeling very low-spirited, till the sunshine and the fresh air came into the room through the open door, and then he began to feel such a great longing for a swim on the water, that he could not help telling the hen.

"What an absurd idea?" said the hen. "You have nothing else to do, therefore you have foolish fancies. If you could purr or lay eggs, they would pass away."

"But it is so delightful to swim about on the water," said the duckling, "and so refreshing to feel it close over your head, while you dive down to the bottom."

"Delightful indeed!" said the hen, "why, you must be crazy! Ask the cat, he is the cleverest animal I know, ask him how he would like to swim about on the water, or to dive under it, for I will not speak of my own opinion; ask our mistress, the old woman—there is no one in the world more clever than she is. Do you think she would like to swim, or to let the water close over her head?"

"You don't understand me," said the duckling.

"We don't understand you? Who can understand you, I wonder? Do you consider yourself more clever than the cat, or the old woman? I will say nothing of myself. Don't imagine such nonsense, child, and thank your good fortune that you have been received here. Are you not in a warm room, and in society from which you may learn something. But you are a chatterer, and your company is not very agreeable? Believe me, I speak only for your good. I may tell you unpleasant truths, but that is a proof of my friendship. I advise you, therefore, to lay eggs, and learn to purr as quickly as possible."

"I believe I must go out into the world again," said the duckling.

"Yes, do," said the hen. So the duckling left the cottage, and soon found water on which it could swim and dive, but was avoided by all other animals, because of its ugly appearance.

Autumn came, and the leaves in the forest turned to orange and gold; then, as winter approached, the wind caught them as they fell and whirled them in the cold air. The clouds, heavy with hail and snow-flakes, hung low in the sky, and the raven stood on the ferns crying, "Croak, croak." It made one shiver with cold to look at him. All this was very sad for the poor little duckling. One evening, just as the sun set amid radiant clouds, there came a large flock of beautiful birds out of the bushes. The duckling had never seen any like them before. They were swans, and they curved their graceful necks, while their soft plumage shone with dazzling whiteness. They uttered a singular cry, as they spread their glorious wings and flew away from those cold regions to warmer countries across the sea. As they mounted higher and higher in the air, the



"STRETCHED OUT HIS NECK TOWARDS THEM."—*p.* 50.

ugly little duckling felt quite a strange sensation as he watched them. He whirled himself in the water like a wheel, stretched out his neck towards them, and uttered a cry so strange that it frightened himself. Could he ever forget those beautiful, happy birds? and when at last they were out of his sight, he dived under the water, and rose again almost beside himself with excitement. He knew not the names of these birds, nor where they had flown, but he felt towards them as he had never felt for any other bird in the world. He was not envious of these beautiful creatures, but wished to be as lovely as they. Poor ugly creature, how gladly he would have lived even with the ducks had they only given him encouragement! The winter grew colder and colder; he was obliged to swim about on the water to keep it from freezing, but every night the space on which he swam became smaller and smaller. At length it froze so hard that the ice in the water crackled as he moved, and the duckling had to paddle with his legs as well as he could, to keep the space from closing up. He became exhausted at last, and lay still and helpless, frozen fast in the ice.

Early in the morning, a peasant, who was passing by, saw what had happened. He broke the ice in pieces with his wooden shoe, and carried the duckling home to his wife. The warmth revived the poor little creature; but when the children wanted to play with him, the duckling thought they would do him some harm; so he started up in terror, fluttered into the milk-pan, and splashed the milk about the room. Then the woman clapped her hands, which frightened him still more. He flew first into the butter-cask, then into the meal-tub, and out again. What a condition he was in! The woman screamed, and struck at him with the tongs; the children laughed and screamed, and tumbled over each other, in their efforts to catch him; but luckily he escaped. The door stood open; the poor creature could just manage to slip out among the bushes, and lie down quite exhausted in the newly fallen snow.

It would be very sad, were I to relate all the misery and privations which the poor little duckling endured during the hard

winter; but when it had passed, he found himself lying one morning in a moor, amongst the rushes. He felt the warm sun shining, and heard the lark singing, and saw that all around was beautiful spring. Then the young bird felt that his wings were strong, as he flapped them against his sides, and rose high into the air. They bore him onwards, until he found himself in a large garden, before he well knew how it had happened. The apple-trees were in full blossom, and the fragrant elders bent their long green branches down to the stream which wound round a smooth lawn. Everything looked beautiful, in the freshness of early spring. From a thicket close by came three beautiful white swans, rustling their feathers, and swimming lightly over the smooth water. The duckling remembered the lovely birds, and felt more strangely unhappy than ever.

"I will fly to these royal birds," he exclaimed, "and they will kill me, because I am so ugly, and dare to approach them; but it does not matter: better be killed by them than pecked by the ducks, beaten by the hens, pushed about by the maiden who feeds the poultry, or starved with hunger in the winter."

Then he flew to the water, and swam towards the beautiful swans. The moment they espied the stranger, they rushed to meet him with outstretched wings.

"Kill me," said the poor bird; and he bent his head down to the surface of the water, and awaited death.

But what did he see in the clear stream below? His own image; no longer a dark, grey bird, ugly and disagreeable to look at, but a graceful and beautiful swan. To be born in a duck's nest, in a farmyard, is of no consequence to a bird, if it is hatched from a swan's egg. He now felt glad at having suffered sorrow and trouble, because it enabled him to enjoy so much better all the pleasure and happiness around him; for the great swans swam round the new-comer, and stroked his neck with their beaks, as a welcome.

Into the garden presently came some little children, and threw bread and cake into the water.

"See," cried the youngest, "there is a new one;" and the rest were delighted, and ran to their father and mother, dancing and

clapping their hands, and shouting joyously, "There is another swan come; a new one has arrived."

Then they threw more bread and cake into the water, and said, "The new one is the most beautiful of all; he is so young and pretty." And the old swans bowed their heads before him.

Then he felt quite ashamed, and hid his head under his wing; for he did not know what to do, he was so happy, and yet not at all proud. He had been persecuted and despised for his ugliness; now he heard them say he was the most beautiful of all the birds. Even the elder-tree bent down its boughs into the water before him, and the sun shone warm and bright. Then he rustled his feathers, curved his slender neck, and cried joyfully, from the depths of his heart, "I never dreamed of such happiness as this, while I was an ugly duckling."

Little Ida's Flowers.

"My poor flowers are quite dead," said little Ida; "they were so pretty yesterday evening, and now all the leaves are hanging down quite withered. Why do they do that?" she asked, of the student who sat on the sofa: she liked him very much, he could tell the most amusing stories, and cut out the prettiest pictures—hearts, and ladies dancing, castles with doors that opened, as well as flowers; he was a delightful student. "Why do the flowers look so faded to-day?" she asked again, and pointed to her nosegay, which was quite withered.

"Don't you know what is the matter with them?" said the student. "The flowers were at a ball last night, and therefore, it is no wonder they hang their heads."

"But flowers cannot dance?" cried little Ida.

"Yes, indeed, they can," replied the student. "When it grows dark, and everybody is asleep, they jump about quite merrily. They have a ball almost every night."

"Can children go to these balls?"

"Yes," said the student, "little daisies and lilies of the valley."

"Where do the beautiful flowers dance?" asked little Ida.

"Have you not often seen the large castle outside the gates of the town, where the king lives in summer, and where the beautiful garden is full of flowers? And have you not fed the swans with bread when they swam towards you? Well, the flowers have capital balls there, believe me."

"I was in the garden out there yesterday with my mother," said Ida, "but all the leaves were off the trees, and there was not a single flower left. Where are they? I used to see so many in the summer."

"They are in the castle," replied the student. "You must know that as soon as the king and all the court are gone into the town, the flowers run out of the garden into the castle, and you should see how merry they are. The two most beautiful roses seat themselves on the throne, and are called the king and queen, then all the red cockscombs range themselves on each side, and bow, these are the lords-in-waiting. After that the pretty flowers come in, and there is a grand ball. The blue violets represent little naval cadets, and dance with hyacinths and crocuses, which they call young ladies. The tulips and tiger-lilies are the old ladies who sit and watch the dancing, so that everything may be conducted with order and propriety."

"But," said little Ida, "is there no one there to hurt the flowers for dancing in the king's castle?"

"No one knows anything about it," said the student. "The old steward of the castle, who has to watch there at night, sometimes comes in; but he carries a great bunch of keys, and as soon as the flowers hear the keys rattle, they run and hide themselves behind the long curtains, and stand quite still, just peeping their heads out. Then the old steward says, 'I smell flowers here,' but he cannot see them."

"Oh, how capital!" said little Ida, clapping her hands. "Should I be able to see these flowers?"

"Yes," said the student; "mind you think of it next time you go out. No doubt you will see them, if you peep through the

window. I did so to-day, and I saw a long yellow lily lying stretched out on the sofa; she was a court lady."

"Can the flowers from the Botanical Gardens go to these balls?" asked Ida. "It is such a distance!"

"Oh yes," said the student, "whenever they like, for they can fly. Have you not seen those beautiful red, white, and yellow butterflies, that look like flowers? They were flowers once. They have flown off their stalks into the air, and flap their leaves as if they were little wings to make them fly. Then, if they behave well, they obtain permission to fly about during the day, instead of being obliged to sit still on their stems at home, and so in time their leaves become real wings. It may be, however, that the flowers in the Botanical Gardens have never been to the king's palace, and, therefore, they know nothing of the merry doings at night, which take place there. I will tell you what to do, and the botanical professor, who lives close by here, will be so surprised. You know him very well, do you not? Well, next time you go into his garden, you must tell one of the flowers that there is going to be a grand ball at the castle, then that flower will tell all the others, and they will fly away to the castle as soon as possible. And when the professor walks into his garden, there will not be a single flower left. How he will wonder what has become of them!"

"But how can one flower tell another? Flowers cannot speak."

"No, certainly not," replied the student; "but they can make signs. Have you not often seen that when the wind blows they nod at one another, and rustle all their green leaves?"

"Can the professor understand the signs?" asked Ida.

"Yes, to be sure he can. He went one morning into his garden, and saw a stinging-nettle making signs with its leaves to a beautiful red carnation. It was saying, 'You are so pretty, I like you very much.' But the professor did not approve of such nonsense, so he clapped his hands on the nettle to stop it. Then the leaves, which are its fingers, stung him so sharply that he has never ventured to touch a nettle since."

"Oh, how funny!" said Ida, and she laughed.

"How can any one put such notions into a child's head?" said a tiresome lawyer, who had come to pay a visit, and sat on the sofa. He did not like the student, and would grumble when he saw him cutting out droll or amusing pictures. Sometimes it would be a man hanging on a gibbet and holding a heart in his hand as if he had been stealing hearts. Sometimes it was an old witch riding through the air on a broom and carrying her husband on her nose. But the lawyer did not like such jokes, and he would say as he had just said, "How can any one put such nonsense into a child's head? what absurd fancies there are!"

But to little Ida, all these stories which the student told her about the flowers seemed very droll, and she thought over them a great deal. The flowers did hang their heads, because they had been dancing all night, and were very tired, and most likely they were ill. Then she took them into the room where a number of toys lay on a pretty little table, and the whole of the table drawer besides was full of beautiful things. Her doll Sophy lay in the doll's bed asleep, and little Ida said to her, "You must really get up, Sophy, and be content to lie in the drawer to-night; the poor flowers are ill, and they must lie in your bed, then perhaps they will get well again." So she took the doll out, who looked quite cross, and said not a single word, for she was angry at being turned out of her bed. Ida placed the flowers in the doll's bed, and drew the quilt over them. Then she told them to lie quite still and be good, while she made some tea for them, so that they might be quite well and able to get up the next morning. And she drew the curtains close round the little bed, so that the sun might not shine in their eyes. During the whole evening she could not help thinking of what the student had told her. And before she went to bed herself, she was obliged to peep behind the curtains into the garden where all her mother's beautiful flowers grew, hyacinths and tulips, and many others. Then she whispered to them quite softly, "I know you are going to a ball to-night." But the flowers appeared as if they did not understand, and not a leaf moved; still Ida felt quite sure she knew all about

it. She lay awake a long time after she was in bed, thinking how pretty it must be to see all the beautiful flowers dancing in the king's garden. "I wonder if my flowers have really been there?" she said to herself, and then she fell asleep. In the night she awoke; she had been dreaming of the flowers and of the student, as well as of the tiresome lawyer who found fault with him. It was quite still in Ida's bedroom; the night-lamp burnt on the table, and her father and mother were asleep. "I wonder if my flowers are still lying in Sophy's bed?" she thought to herself; "how much I should like to know!" She raised herself a little, and glanced at the door of the room where all her flowers and playthings lay; it was partly open, and as she listened, it seemed as if some one in the room was playing the piano, but softly and more prettily than she had ever before heard it. "Now all the flowers are certainly dancing in there," she thought; "oh, how much I should like to see them!" but she did not dare to move for fear of disturbing her father and mother. "If they would only come in here," she thought; but they did not come, and the music continued to play so beautifully, and was so pretty, that she could resist no longer. She crept out of her little bed, went softly to the door, and looked into the room. Oh, what a splendid sight there was to be sure! There was no night-lamp burning, but the room appeared quite light, for the moon shone through the window upon the floor, and made it almost like day. All the hyacinths and tulips stood in two long rows down the room, not a single flower remained in the window, and the flower-pots were all empty. The flowers were dancing gracefully on the floor, making turns and holding each other by their long green leaves as they swung round. At the piano sat a large yellow lily which little Ida was sure she had seen in the summer, for she remembered the student saying she was very much like Miss Lina, one of Ida's friends. They all laughed at him then, but now it seemed to little Ida as if the tall, yellow flower was really like the young lady. She had just the same manners while playing, bending her long yellow face from side to side, and nodding in time to the beautiful music. Then she saw a large purple crocus jump into the middle of the table where the

playthings stood, go up to the doll's bedstead and draw back the curtains; there lay the sick flowers, but they got up directly, and nodded to the others as a sign that they wished to dance with them. The old rough doll, with the broken mouth, stood up and bowed to the pretty flowers. They did not look ill at all now, but jumped about and were very merry, yet none of them noticed little Ida. Presently it seemed as if something fell from the table. Ida looked that way, and saw a slight carnival rod jumping down among the flowers as if it belonged to them; it was, however, very smooth and neat, and a little wax doll with a broad-brimmed hat on her head, like the one worn by the lawyer, sat upon it. The carnival rod hopped about among the flowers on its three red stilted feet, and stamped quite loud when it danced the Mazurka; the flowers could not perform this dance, they were too light to stamp in that manner. All at once the wax doll which rode on the carnival rod seemed to grow larger and taller, and it turned round and said to the paper flowers, "How can you put such things in a child's head? they are all foolish fancies;" and then the doll was exactly like the lawyer with the broad-brimmed hat, and looked as yellow and as cross as he did; but the paper dolls struck him on his thin legs, and he shrunk up again and became quite a little wax doll. This was very amusing, and Ida could not help laughing. The carnival rod went on dancing, and the lawyer was obliged to dance also. It was no use for him to make himself great and tall, or to remain a little wax doll with a large black hat; still he must dance. Then at last the other flowers interceded for him, especially those who had lain in the doll's bed, and the carnival rod gave up his dancing. At the same moment a loud knocking was heard in the drawer, where Ida's doll Sophy lay with many other toys. Then the rough doll ran to the end of the table, laid himself flat down upon it, and began to pull the drawer out a little way.

Sophy raised herself, and looked round quite astonished. "There must be a ball here to-night," she said. "Why did not somebody tell me?"

"Will you dance with me?" said the rough doll.

"You are the right sort to dance with, certainly," said she, turning her back upon him.

Then she seated herself on the edge of the drawer, and thought that perhaps one of the flowers would ask her to dance; but none of them did. Then she coughed, "Hem, hem, a-hem;" but for all that no partner came. The shabby doll now danced quite alone, and not very badly, after all. As none of the flowers seemed to notice Sophy, she let herself down from the drawer to the floor, so as to make a very great noise. All the flowers came round her directly, and asked if she had hurt herself, especially those who had lain in her bed. But she was not hurt at all, and Ida's flowers thanked her for the use of the nice bed, and were very kind to her. They led her into the middle of the room, where the moon shone, and danced with her, while all the other flowers formed a circle round them. Then Sophy was very happy, and said they might keep her bed; she did not mind lying in the drawer at all. But the flowers thanked her very much, and said,—

"We cannot live long. To-morrow morning we shall be quite dead; and you must tell little Ida to bury us in the garden, near the grave of the canary; then, in the summer we shall wake up again, and be more beautiful than ever."

"No, you must not die," said Sophy, as she kissed the flowers.

Then the door of the room opened, and a number of beautiful flowers danced in. Ida could not imagine where they could have come from, unless they were the flowers from the king's garden. First came two lovely roses, with little golden crowns on their heads; these were the king and queen. Beautiful stocks and carnations followed, bowing to every one present. They had also music with them. Large poppies and peonies had pea-shells for instruments, and blew into them till they were quite red in the face. The bunches of blue hyacinths and the little white snow-drops jingled their bell-like flowers, as if they were real bells. Then came many more flowers: blue violets, purple heart's-ease, daisies, and lilies of the valley, and they all danced together, and kissed each other. It was very beautiful to behold.

At last the flowers wished each other good night. Then little Ida crept back into bed again, and dreamt of all she had seen. When she arose the next morning, she went quickly to the little table, to see if the flowers were still there. She drew aside the curtains of the little bed. There they all lay, but quite faded; much more so than the day before. Sophy was lying in the drawer where Ida had placed her; but she looked very sleepy.

"Do you remember what the flowers told you to say to me?" asked little Ida. But Sophy looked quite stupid, and said not a single word.

"You are not kind at all," said Ida; "and yet they all danced with you."

Then she took a little paper box, on which were painted beautiful birds, and laid the dead flowers in it.

"This shall be your pretty coffin," she said; "and by-and-by, when my cousins come to visit me, they shall help me to bury you out in the garden; so that next summer you may grow up again more beautiful than ever."

Her cousins were two good-tempered boys, whose names were James and Adolphus. Their father had given them each a bow and arrow, and they had brought them to show Ida. She told them about the poor flowers which were dead; and as soon as they obtained permission, they went with her to bury them. The two boys walked first, with their crossbows on their shoulders, and little Ida followed, carrying the pretty box containing the dead flowers. They dug a little grave in the garden. Ida kissed her flowers, and then laid them, with the box, in the earth. James and Adolphus then fired their crossbows over the grave, as they had neither guns nor cannons.



The Storks.

On the last house in a little village the storks had built a nest, and the mother stork sat in it with her four young ones, who stretched out their necks and pointed their black beaks, which had not yet turned red like those of the parent birds. A little way off, on the edge of the roof, stood the father stork, quite upright and stiff; not liking to look quite idle, he drew up one leg, and stood on the other, so still that it seemed almost as if he were carved in wood. "It will look very grand," thought he, "for my wife to have a sentry guarding her nest. They do not know that I am her husband; they will think I have been commanded to stand here, which is quite aristocratic:" and so he continued standing on one leg.

In the street below were a number of children at play, and when they caught sight of the storks, one of the boldest amongst the boys began to sing a song about them, and very soon he was joined by the rest. These are the words of the song, but each only sang what he could remember of them in his own way.

"Stork, stork, fly away,
Stand not on one leg, I pray;
See your wife is in her nest,
With her little ones at rest.
They will hang one,
And fry another;
They will shoot a third,
And roast his brother."

"Just hear what those boys are singing," said the young storks; "they say we shall be hanged and roasted."

"Never mind what they say; you need not listen," said the mother. "They can do no harm."

But the boys went on singing and pointing at the storks, and mocking at them, excepting one of the boys whose name was Peter; he said it was a shame to make fun of animals, and would not join with them at all. The mother stork comforted her young ones, and told them not to mind. "See," she said, "how quiet your father stands, although he is only on one leg."

"But we are very much frightened," said the young storks, and they drew back their heads into the nest.

The next day, when the children were playing together, and saw the storks, they sang the song again—

"They will hang one,
And roast another."

"Shall we be hanged and roasted?" asked the young storks.

"No, certainly not," said the mother. "I will teach you to fly, and when you have learnt, we will fly into the meadows, and pay a visit to the frogs, who will bow themselves to us in the water, and cry 'Croak, croak,' and then we shall eat them up; that will be fun."

"And what next?" asked the young storks.

"Then," replied the mother, "all the storks in the country

will assemble together, and go through their autumn manœuvres, so that it is very important for every one to know how to fly properly. If they do not, the general will thrust them through with his beak, and kill them. Therefore you must take pains and learn, so as to be ready when the drilling begins."

"Then we may be killed after all, as the boys say; and hark! they are singing again."

"Listen to me, and not to them," said the mother stork. "After the great review is over, we shall fly away to warm countries far from hence, where there are mountains and forests. To Egypt, where we shall see three-cornered houses built of stone, with pointed tops that reach nearly to the clouds. They are called Pyramids, and are older than a stork could imagine; and in that country, there is a river that overflows its banks, and then goes back, leaving nothing but mire; there we can walk about, and eat frogs in abundance."

"Oh, o—h!" cried the young storks.

"Yes, it is a delightful place; there is nothing to do all day long but eat, and while we are so well off out there, in this country there will not be a single green leaf on the trees, and the weather will be so cold that the clouds will freeze, and fall on the earth in little white rags." The stork meant snow, but she could not explain it in any other way.

"Will the naughty boys freeze and fall in pieces?" asked the young storks.

"No, they will not freeze and fall into pieces," said the mother, "but they will be very cold, and be obliged to sit all day in a dark, gloomy room, while we shall be flying about in foreign lands, where there are blooming flowers and warm sunshine."

Time passed on, and the young storks grew so large that they could stand upright in the nest and look about them. The father brought them, every day, beautiful frogs, little snakes, and all kinds of stork-dainties that he could find. And then, how funny it was to see the tricks he would perform to amuse them. He would lay his head quite round over his tail, and clatter with his beak, as if it had been a rattle; and then he would tell them stories all about the marshes and fens.

"Come," said the mother one day, "now you must learn to fly." And all the four young ones were obliged to come out on the top of the roof. Oh, how they tottered at first, and were obliged to balance themselves with their wings, or they would have fallen to the ground below.

"Look at me," said the mother, "you must hold your heads in this way, and place your feet so. Once, twice, once, twice—that is it. Now you will be able to take care of yourselves in the world."

Then she flew a little distance from them, and the young ones made a spring to follow her; but down they fell plump, for their bodies were still too heavy.

"I don't want to fly," said one of the young storks, creeping back into the nest. "I don't care about going to warm countries."

"Would you like to stay here and freeze when the winter comes?" said the mother, "or till the boys come to hang you, or to roast you?—Well then, I'll call them."

"Oh no, no," said the young stork, jumping out on the roof with the others; and now they were all attentive, and by the third day could fly a little. Then they began to fancy they could soar, so they tried to do so, resting on their wings, but they soon found themselves falling, and had to flap their wings as quickly as possible. The boys came again in the street singing their song:—

"Stork, stork, fly away."

"Shall we fly down, and pick their eyes out?" asked the young storks.

"No; leave them alone," said the mother. "Listen to me; that is much more important. Now then. One—two—three. Now to the right. One—two—three. Now to the left, round the chimney. There now, that was very good. That last flap of the wings was so easy and graceful, that I shall give you permission to fly with me to-morrow to the marshes. There will be a number of very superior storks there with their families, and I expect you to show them that my children are the best brought

up of any who may be present. You must strut about proudly—it will look well and make you respected."

"But may we not punish those naughty boys?" asked the young storks.

"No; let them scream away as much as they like. You can fly from them now up high amid the clouds, and will be in the land of the pyramids when they are freezing, and have not a green leaf on the trees or an apple to eat."

"We will revenge ourselves," whispered the young storks to each other, as they again joined the exercising.

Of all the boys in the street who sang the mocking song about the storks, not one was so determined to go on with it as he who first began it. Yet he was a little fellow not more than six years old. To the young storks he appeared at least a hundred, for he was so much bigger than their father and mother. To be sure, storks cannot be expected to know how old children and grown-up people are. So they determined to have their revenge on this boy, because he began the song first and would keep on with it. The young storks were very angry, and grew worse as they grew older; so at last their mother was obliged to promise that they should be revenged, but not until the day of their departure.

"We must see first, how you acquit yourselves at the grand review," said she. "If you get on badly there, the general will thrust his beak through you, and you will be killed, as the boys said, though not exactly in the same manner. So we must wait and see."

"You shall see," said the young birds, and then they took such pains and practised so well every day, that at last it was quite a pleasure to see them fly so lightly and prettily. As soon as the autumn arrived, all the storks began to assemble together before taking their departure for warm countries during the winter. Then the review commenced. They flew over forests and villages to show what they could do, for they had a long journey before them. The young storks performed their part so well that they received a mark of honour, with frogs and snakes as a present. These presents

were the best part of the affair, for they could eat the frogs and snakes, which they very quickly did.

"Now let us have our revenge," they cried.

"Yes, certainly," cried the mother stork. "I have thought upon the best way to be revenged. I know the pond in which all the little children lie, waiting till the storks come to take them to their parents. The prettiest little babies lie there dreaming more sweetly than they will ever dream in the time to come. All parents are glad to have a little child, and children are so pleased with a little brother or sister. Now we will fly to the pond and fetch a little baby for each of the children who did not sing that naughty song to make game of the storks."

"But the naughty boy, who began the song first, what shall we do to him?" cried the young storks.

"There lies in the pond a little dead baby who has dreamed itself to death," said the mother. "We will take it to the naughty boy, and he will cry because we have brought him a little dead brother. But you have not forgotten the good boy who said it was a shame to laugh at animals: we will take him a little brother and sister too, because he was good. He is called Peter, and you shall all be called Peter in future."

So they all did what their mother had arranged, and from that day, even till now, all the storks have been called Peter.

The Money-Box.

In a nursery where a number of toys lay scattered about, a money-box stood on the top of a very high wardrobe. It was made of clay in the shape of a pig, and had been bought of the potter. In the back of the pig was a slit, and this slit had been enlarged with a knife, so that dollars, or crown pieces, might slip through; and, indeed, there were two crown pieces in the box, besides a number of pence. The money-pig was stuffed so full that it could no longer rattle, which is the highest state of perfection to which a

money-pig can attain. There he stood upon the cupboard, high and lofty, looking down upon everything else in the room. He knew very well that he had enough inside him to buy up all the other toys, and this gave him a very good opinion of his own value. The rest thought of this fact also, although they did not speak of it, for there were so many other things to talk about. A large doll, still handsome, though rather old, for her neck had been mended, lay inside one of the drawers which was partly open. She called out to the others, "Let us have a game at being men and women; that is worth playing at."

Upon this there was a great uproar; even the engravings, which hung in frames on the wall, turned round in their excitement, and showed that they had a wrong side to them, although they had not the least intention to expose themselves in this way, or to object to the game. It was late at night, but as the moon shone through the windows, they had light at a cheap rate. And as the game was now to begin, all were invited to take part in it, even the children's waggon, which certainly belonged to the coarser play-things. "Each has its own value," said the waggon; "we cannot all be noblemen; there must be some to do the work."

The money-pig was the only one who received a written invitation. He stood so high that they were afraid he would not accept a verbal message. But in his reply he said that, if he had to take a part, he must enjoy the sport from his own home; they were to arrange for him to do so; and so they did. The little toy theatre was therefore put up in such a way that the money-pig could look directly into it. Some wanted to begin with a comedy, and afterwards to have a tea-party and a discussion for mental improvement, but they commenced with the latter first. The rocking-horse spoke of training and races; the waggon of railways and steam power, for these subjects belonged to each of their professions, and it was right they should talk of them. The clock talked politics—"tick, tick;" he professed to know what was the time of day, but there was a whisper that he did not go correctly. The bamboo cane stood by, looking stiff and proud—he was vain of his brass ferrule and silver top; and on the sofa lay two worked cushions, pretty but stupid.

When the play at the little theatre began, the rest sat and looked on; they were requested to applaud and stamp, and the whip to crack, when they felt gratified with what they saw. But the riding-whip said he never cracked for old people, only for the young who were not yet married. "I crack for everybody," said the cracker.

"Yes, and a fine noise you make," thought the audience, as the play went on.

It was not worth much, but it was very well played, and all the characters turned their painted sides to the audience, for they were made only to be seen on one side. The acting was wonderful, excepting that sometimes they came out beyond the lamps, because the wires were a little too long. The doll, whose neck had been darned, was so excited that the place in her neck burst, and the money-pig declared he must do something for one of the players, as they had all pleased him so much. So he made up his mind to mention one of them in his will, as the one to be buried with him in the family vault, whenever that event should happen. They all enjoyed the comedy so much, that they gave up all thoughts of the tea-party, and only carried out their idea of intellectual amusement, which they called playing at men and women; and there was nothing wrong about it, for it was only play. All the while, each one thought most of himself, or of what the money-pig could be thinking. His thoughts were on (as he supposed) a very distant time—of making his will, and of his burial, and of when it might all come to pass. Certainly sooner than he expected—for all at once down he came from the top of the press, fell on the ground, and was broken to pieces. Then the pennies hopped and danced about in the most amusing manner. The little ones twirled round like tops, and the large ones rolled away as far as they could, especially one of the great silver crown pieces who had often wanted to go out into the world, and now he had his wish as well as all the rest of the money. The pieces of the money-pig were thrown into the dustbin, and the next day there stood a new money-pig on the cupboard, but it had not a farthing in its inside yet, and therefore it could not rattle like the old one. This was the beginning with him, and we will make it the end of our story.

The Top and Ball.

A WHIPPING-TOP and a little ball lay together in a box, among other toys, and the top said to the ball, "Shall we be married, as we live in the same box?"

But the ball, which wore a dress of morocco leather, and thought as much of herself as any other young lady, would not even condescend to reply.

The next day came the little boy to whom the playthings belonged, and he painted the top red and yellow, and drove a brass-headed nail into the middle, so that while the top was spinning round it looked splendid.

"Look at me," said the top to the ball. "What do you say now? Shall we be engaged to each other? We should suit so well; you spring, and I dance. No one could be happier than we should be."

"Indeed! do you think so? Perhaps you do not know that my father and mother were morocco slippers, and that I have a Spanish cork in my body."

"Yes; but I am made of mahogany," said the top. "The mayor himself turned me. He has a turning-lathe of his own, and it is a great amusement to him."

"Can I believe it?" asked the ball.

"May I never be whipped again," said the top, "if I am not telling you the truth."

"You certainly know how to speak for yourself very well," said the ball; "but I cannot accept your proposal. I am almost engaged to a swallow. Every time I fly up in the air, he puts his head out of the nest, and says, 'Will you?' and I have said, 'Yes,' to myself, silently, and that is as good as being half engaged; but I will promise never to forget you."

"Much good that will be to me," said the top; and they spoke to each other no more.

Next day the ball was taken out by the boy. The top saw it flying high in the air, like a bird, till it would go quite out of sight. Each time it came back, as it touched the earth, it gave a

higher leap than before, either because it longed to fly upwards, or from having a Spanish cork in its body. But the ninth time it rose in the air, it remained away, and did not return. The boy searched everywhere for it, but he searched in vain, for it could not be found; it was gone.

"I know very well where she is," sighed the top; "she is in the swallow's nest, and has married the swallow."

The more the top thought of this, the more he longed for the ball. His love increased the more, just because he could not get her; and that she should have been won by another, was the worst of all. The top still twirled about and hummed, but he continued to think of the ball; and the more he thought of her, the more beautiful she seemed to his fancy.

Thus several years passed by, and his love became quite old. The top, also, was no longer young; but there came a day when he looked handsomer than ever; for he was gilded all over. He was now a golden top, and whirled and danced about till he hummed quite loud, and was something worth looking at; but one day he leaped too high, and then he, also, was gone. They searched everywhere, even in the cellar, but he was nowhere to be found. Where could he be? He had jumped into the dust-bin, where all sorts of rubbish were lying: cabbage-stalks, dust, and rain-droppings that had fallen down from the gutter under the roof.

"Now I am in a nice place," said he; "my gilding will soon be washed off here. Oh dear, what a set of rabble I have got amongst!" And then he glanced at a curious round thing, like an old apple, which lay near a long, leafless cabbage-stalk. It was, however, not an apple, but an old ball, which had lain for years in the gutter, and was soaked through with water.

"Thank goodness, here comes one of my own class, with whom I can talk," said the ball, examining the gilded top. "I am made of morocco," she said. "I was sewn together by a young lady, and I have a Spanish cork in my body; but no one would think it, to look at me now. I was once engaged to a swallow; but I fell in here from the gutter under the roof, and I have lain here more than five years, and have been thoroughly drenched. Believe me, it is a long time for a young maiden."

The top said nothing, but he thought of his old love; and the more she said, the more clear it became to him that this was the same ball.

The servant then came to clear out the dust-bin.

"Ah," she exclaimed, "here is a gilt top!" So the top was brought again to notice and honour, but nothing more was heard of the little ball. He spoke not a word about his old love; for that soon died away. When the beloved object has lain for five years in a gutter, and has been drenched through, no one cares to know her again on meeting her in a dust-bin.

The Red Shoes.

THERE was once a little girl who was very pretty and delicate; but in summer she used to go barefooted, because she was poor; in winter she wore large wooden shoes, and her little insteps became quite red.

In the village lived an old shoemaker's wife, who had some old strips of red cloth; and she sewed these together, as well as she could, into a little pair of shoes. They were rather clumsy; but the intention was kind, for the little girl was to have them, and her name was Karen. She received these shoes on the very day on which her mother was buried, and she wore them for the first time. They were certainly not suitable for mourning, but she had no others; so she put them on her bare feet, and walked behind the poor deal coffin.

There came by a large old-fashioned carriage, in which sat an old lady. She looked at the little girl, and felt pity for her; so she said to the clergyman, "Pray give me that little girl, and I will adopt her."

Karen thought all this happened because of her red shoes; but the old lady considered them horrible, and so they were burnt. But Karen herself was dressed in neat, tidy clothes, and taught to read and to sew, and people said she was pretty; but the looking glass said, "You are more than pretty; you are beautiful."

Not long after, a queen travelled through the country with her little daughter, who was a princess, and crowds flocked to the castle to see them. Karen was amongst them, and she saw the little princess in a white dress, standing at a window, to allow every one to gaze upon her. She had neither train nor golden crown on her head ; but she wore a beautiful pair of red morocco shoes, which certainly were rather handsomer than those that the old shoemaker's wife had made for little Karen. Surely nothing in the world could be compared with those red shoes.

The time arrived for Karen to be confirmed. New clothes were made for her, and she was to have, also, a pair of new shoes. A rich shoemaker in the town took the measure of her little foot, at his own house, in a room where stood large glass cases full of elegant shoes and shining boots. They looked beautiful ; but the old lady could not see very well, so she had not much pleasure in looking at them. Among the shoes stood a pair of red ones, just like those which the princess had worn. Oh, how pretty they were ! The shoemaker said they had been made for a count's child, but they had not fitted her properly.

" Are they of polished leather ? " said the old lady ; " for they shine as if they were."

" Yes, they do shine," said Karen ; and as they fitted her, they were bought ; but the old lady did not know they were red, or she would never have allowed Karen to go to confirmation in red shoes, which, however, she did. Every one looked at her feet ; and as she passed through the church, to the entrance of the choir, it seemed as if the old pictures on the tombs, and the portraits of clergymen and their wives, with their stiff collars and long black dresses, were all fixing their eyes on her red shoes ; and she thought of them only, even when the clergyman laid his hands on her head, and spoke of her baptism, and of her covenant with God, and that now she must remember that she must act as a grown-up Christian. And the organ pealed forth its solemn tones, and the fresh, young voices of the children sounded sweetly, as they joined with the choir ; but Karen thought only of her red shoes.

In the afternoon the old lady was told by every one that the

shoes were red; and she said it was very shocking, and not at all proper, and told Karen that, when she went to church in future, she must always wear black shoes, even though they might be old.

Next Sunday was sacrament Sunday, and Karen was to receive it for the first time. She looked at her black shoes, and then at the red ones; then looked again, and put on the red ones. The sun shone brightly, and Karen and the old lady went to church by the footpath through the fields; for the road was so dusty.

Near the church door stood an old invalid soldier, with a crutch and a wonderfully long beard, more red than white. He bowed nearly to the ground, and asked the old lady if he might wipe her shoes. And Karen stretched out her little foot also.

"Why, these are dancing shoes!" cried the soldier. "I will make them stick fast to your feet when you dance." And then he slapped the soles of her shoes with his hand.

The old lady gave the soldier some money, and then went into church with Karen. Every one in the church looked at Karen's red shoes, and the pictures looked at them; and when she knelt at the altar, and took the golden cup to her lips, she thought only of her red shoes, and it was to her as if they passed before her eyes in the cup; and she forgot to sing the psalm, or to say the Lord's Prayer. Then all the people went out of church, and the old lady stepped into her carriage. Karen lifted her foot to step in also, and the old soldier cried, "See what beautiful dancing shoes!"

And then Karen found she could not help dancing a few steps; and when she began, it seemed as if her legs would go on dancing. It was just as if the shoes had a power over her. She danced round the corner of the church, and could not stop herself. The coachman was obliged to run after her, and catch her, and then lift her into the carriage, and even then her feet would go on dancing, so that she kept treading on the good old lady's toes. At last she took off the shoes, and then her legs had a little rest. As soon as they reached home, the shoes were put away in a closet; but Karen could not resist looking at them.

Soon after this the old lady was taken ill, and it was said that she could not recover. She had to be waited upon and nursed,



"SEE WHAT PRETTY DANCING SHOES."—*p. 75.*

and no one ought to have been so anxious to do this as Karen. But there was to be a grand ball in the town, to which Karen was invited. She thought of the old lady, who could not recover, she looked at her red shoes, and then she reflected that there could be no harm in her putting them on, nor was there; but her next act was to go to the ball, and to join in the dancing. But the shoes would not let her do as she wished: when she wanted to go to the right, they would dance to the left; or if she wished to go up the floor, they persisted in going down; and at last they danced down the stairs, into the street, and out of the town gate. She danced on in spite of herself, till she came to a gloomy wood. Something was shining up among the trees. At first she thought it was the moon, and then she saw a face. It was the old soldier, with his red beard; and he sat and nodded to her, and said, "See what pretty dancing shoes they are."

Then she was frightened, and tried to pull off the red shoes; but they clung fast. She tore off her stockings; but the shoes seemed to have grown to her feet. And she was obliged to continue dancing over fields and meadows, in rain or in sunshine, by night or by day; but it was most terrible at night. She danced through the open churchyard; the dead there do not dance: they are better employed. She would gladly have seated herself on the poor man's grave, where the bitter fern-leaves grew; but for her there was neither rest nor peace. And then, as she danced towards the open church door, she saw before her an angel, in long white robes, and wings that reached from his shoulders down to the ground. His countenance was grave and stern, and in his hand he held a bright and glittering sword.

"Thou shalt dance," said he, "dance in thy red shoes, till thou art pale and cold, and till thy skin shrivels up to a skeleton. Thou shalt dance from door to door; and where proud, haughty children live, thou shalt knock, so that they may hear thee, and be afraid; yea, thou shalt dance."

"Mercy!" cried Karen; but she heard not what the angel answered; for her shoes carried her away from the door, into the fields, over highways and byways; but dancing, dancing ever.

One morning she danced by a door which she knew well. She could hear sounds of singing within, and a coffin, decked with flowers, was presently carried out. Then she knew that the old lady was dead, and she felt that she was forsaken by all the world, and condemned by an angel from heaven. Still must she dance through the long days and the dark, gloomy nights. The shoes carried her on through brambles, and over stumps of trees, which scratched her till the blood came. Then she danced across a heath to a little lonely house. Here, she knew, the executioner dwelt; and she tapped with her fingers on the window-pane, and said, "Come out, come out; I cannot come in, for I must dance."

And the executioner said, "Do you not know who I am? I cut off the heads of wicked people, and I perceive now that my axe tingles through my fingers."

"Do not strike off my head," said Karen, "for then I shall not be able to repent of my sin; but cut off my feet with the red shoes." And then she confessed all her sins, and the executioner cut off her feet with the red shoes on them, and the shoes, with the little feet in them, danced away over the fields, and were lost in the dark wood. And he cut out a pair of wooden feet for her, and gave her crutches; then he taught her a psalm, which the penitents always sing, and she kissed the hand that had held the axe, and went away across the heath. "Now I have suffered enough for the red shoes," said she; "I will go to church, that I may be seen there by the people;" and she went as quickly as she could to the church door, but when she arrived there, the red shoes danced before her eyes so, that she was frightened, and turned back. Through the whole week she was in sorrow, and wept many bitter tears; but when Sunday came again, she said, "Now I have suffered and striven enough; I believe I am quite as good as many of those who go to church, and sit there showing their airs." And then she went boldly on, but she did not get further than the churchyard gate, for there were the red shoes dancing before her. Then she was really frightened, and went back, and repented of her sinful pride with her whole heart. She went to the parsonage and

begged to be taken there as a servant, promising to be industrious, and do all that she could, even without wages. All she wanted was the shelter of a home, and to be with good people. The clergyman's wife had pity on her, and took her into her service; and she was industrious and thoughtful. Silently she sat and listened when the clergyman read the Bible aloud in the evening. All the little ones became very fond of her, but when they spoke of dress, or finery, or beauty, she would shake her head. Next Sunday they all went to church, and they asked her if she would like to go with them; but she looked sorrowfully and with tearful eyes at her crutches. And while the others went to listen to God's word, she sat alone in her little room, which was only just large enough to contain a bed and a chair. And here she remained with her hymn-book in her hand, and as she read in a humble spirit, the wind wafted the tones of the organ from the church towards her, and she lifted her tearful face, and said, "O Lord, help me." Then the sun shone brightly, and before her stood the angel, in the long white robes, the same whom she had seen one night at the church door, but he no longer held in his hand a sharp sword, but a beautiful green branch covered with roses, and as he touched the ceiling with the branch, it raised itself to a lofty height, and on the spot where it had been touched, gleamed a golden star. He also touched the walls, and they opened wide, so that she could see the organ whose tones sounded so melodious. She saw, too, the old pictures of the clergymen and their wives, and the congregation sitting on the ornamented seats, and singing out of their hymn-books. The church itself had come to the poor girl in her narrow room, or the room had become a church to her. She found herself sitting on a seat with the rest of the clergyman's servants, and when they had finished the psalm, they looked at her and nodded, and said, "It was right of you to come, Karen."

"It was through mercy I came," said she. And then the organ pealed forth again, and the children's voices sounded soft and sweet. The bright sunshine streamed through the window, and fell clear and warm upon the chair on which Karen sat. Her

heart became so filled with sunshine, peace, and joy, that it broke, and her soul flew on a sunbeam to heaven, and there was no one in heaven who asked about the RED SHOES.

Little Tuk.

YES, they called him Little Tuk, but it was not his real name; he had called himself so before he could speak plainly, and he meant it for Charles. It was all very well for those who knew him, but not for strangers.

Little Tuk was left at home to take care of his little sister, Gustava, who was much younger than himself, and he had to learn his lessons at the same time, and the two things could not very well be performed together. The poor boy sat there with his sister on his lap, and sung to her all the songs he knew, and now and then he looked into his geography lesson that lay open before him. By the next morning he had to learn by heart all the towns in Zealand, and all that could be described of them.

His mother came home at last, and took little Gustava in her arms. Then Tuk ran to the window, and read so eagerly that he nearly read his eyes out; for it became darker and darker every minute, and his mother had no money to buy a light.

"There goes the old washerwoman up the lane," said the mother, as she looked out of the window; "the poor woman can hardly drag herself along, and now she has to drag a pail of water from the well. Be a good boy, Tuk, and run across and help the old woman, won't you?"

So Tuk ran across quickly, and helped her, but when he came back into the room it was quite dark, and there was not a word said about a light, so he was obliged to go to bed on his little truckle bedstead, and there he lay and thought of his geography lesson, and of Zealand, and of all the master had told him. He ought really to have read it over again, but he could not for want of a light. So he put the geography book under his pillow, for he

had heard that this was a great help towards learning a lesson, but not always to be depended upon. He still lay thinking and thinking, when all at once it seemed as if some one kissed him on his eyes and mouth. He slept and yet he did not sleep; and it appeared as if the old washerwoman looked at him with kind eyes, and said, "It would be a great pity if you did not know your lesson to-morrow morning; you helped me, and now I will help you, and Providence will always help those who help themselves;" and at the same time the book under Tuk's pillow began to move about. "Cluck, cluck, cluck," cried a hen as she crept towards him. "I am a hen from Kjöge,"* and then she told him how many inhabitants the town contained, and about a battle that had been fought there, which really was not worth speaking of.

"Crack, crack," down fell something. It was a wooden bird, the parrot which is used as a target at Prästöe.† He said there were as many inhabitants in that town as he had nails in his body. He was very proud, and said, "Thorwalsden lived close to me,‡ and here I am now, quite comfortable."

But now little Tuk was no longer in bed; all in a moment he found himself on horseback. Gallop, gallop, away he went, seated in front of a richly-attired knight, with a waving plume, who held him on the saddle, and so they rode through the wood by the old town of Wordingburg, which was very large and busy. The king's castle was surrounded by lofty towers, and radiant light streamed from all the windows. Within there were songs and dancing; King Waldemar and the young gaily-dressed ladies of the court were dancing together. Morning dawned, and as the sun rose, the whole city and the king's castle sank suddenly down together. One tower after another fell, till at last only one remained standing on the hill where the castle had formerly been.§

* Kjöge, a little town on Kjöge Bay. Lifting up children by placing the hands on each side of their heads, is called "showing them Kjöge hens."

† Prästöe, a still smaller town.

‡ About a hundred paces from Prästöe lies the estate of Nysöe, where Thorwalsden usually resided while in Denmark, and where he executed many memorable works.

§ Wordingburg under King Waldemar was a place of great importance; now it is a very insignificant town: only a lonely tower and the remains of a well show where the castle once stood.

The town now appeared small and poor, and the school-boys read in their books, which they carried under their arms, that it contained two thousand inhabitants; but this was a mere boast, for it did not contain so many.

And again little Tuk lay in his bed, scarcely knowing whether he was dreaming or not, for some one stood by him.

"Tuk! little Tuk!" said a voice. It was a very little person who spoke. He was dressed as a sailor, and looked small enough to be a middy, but he was not one. "I bring you many greetings from Corsör.* It is a rising town, full of life. It has steamships and mail-coaches. In times past they used to call it ugly, but that is no longer true. I lie on the sea-shore," said Corsör; "I have high-roads and pleasure-gardens; I have given birth to a poet who was witty and entertaining, which they are not all. I once wanted to fit out a ship to sail round the world, but I did not accomplish it, though most likely I might have done so. But I am fragrant with perfume, for close to my gates most lovely roses bloom."

Then before the eyes of little Tuk appeared a confusion of colours, red and green; but it cleared off, and he could distinguish a cliff close to the bay, the slopes of which were quite overgrown with verdure, and on its summit stood a fine old church with pointed towers. Springs of water flowed out of the cliff in thick waterspouts, so that there was a continual splashing. Close by sat an old king with a golden crown on his white head. This was King Hroar of the Springs† and near the springs stood the town of Roeskilde, as it is called. Then all the kings and queens of Denmark went up the ascent to the old church, hand in hand,

* Corsör, on the Great Belt, used to be called the most tiresome town in Denmark before the establishment of steamers. Travellers had to wait for a favourable wind. The title of "tiresome" was ingeniously added to the Danish escutcheon by a witticism of Vaudeville Heibergs. The poet Baggesen was born here.

† Roeskilde (from Roesquelle, rose-spring, falsely called Rothschild), once the capital of Denmark. The town took its name from King Hroar, and from the numerous springs in the neighbourhood. In its beautiful cathedral most of the kings and queens of Denmark are buried. In Roeskilde the Danish States used to assemble.

with golden crowns on their heads, while the organ played and the fountains sent forth jets of water.

Little Tuk saw and heard it all. "Don't forget the names of these towns," said King Hroar.

All at once everything vanished; but where! It seemed to him like turning over the leaves of a book. And now there stood before him an old peasant woman, who had come from Soröe,* where the grass grows in the market-place. She had a green linen apron thrown over her head and shoulders, and it was quite wet, as if it had been raining heavily. "Yes, that it has," said she, and then, just as she was going to tell him a great many pretty stories from Holberg's comedies, and about Waldemar and Absalom, she suddenly shrunk up together, and wagged her head as if she were a frog about to spring. "Croak," she cried; "it is always wet, and as quiet as death in Soröe." Then little Tuk saw she was changed into a frog. "Croak," and again she was an old woman. "One must dress according to the weather," said she. "It is wet, and my town is just like a bottle. By the cork we must go in, and by the cork we must come out again. In olden times I had beautiful fish, and now I have fresh, rosy-cheeked boys in the bottom of the bottle, and they learn wisdom, Hebrew and Greek."

"Croak." It sounded like the cry of the frogs on the moor, or like the creaking of great boots when some one is marching,—always the same tone, so monotonous and wearying, that little Tuk at length fell fast asleep, and then the sound could not annoy him. But even in this sleep came a dream, or something like it. His little sister Gustava, with her blue eyes, and fair curly hair, had grown up a beautiful maiden all at once, and without having wings she could fly. And they flew together over Zealand, over green forests and blue lakes.

"Hark! do you hear the cock crow, little Tuk? 'Cock-a-doodle-doo.' The fowls are flying out of Kjöge. You shall have

* Soröe, a very quiet little town in a beautiful situation, surrounded by forests and lakes. Holberg, the Molière of Denmark, founded a noble academy here. The poets Hanck and Jugeman were professors here, and Letztern lived here.

a large farm-yard. You shall never suffer hunger or want. The bird of good omen shall be yours, and you shall become a rich and happy man; your house shall rise up like King Waldemar's towers, and shall be richly adorned with marble statues, like those at Prästöe. Understand me well; your name shall travel with fame round the world like the ship that was to sail from Corsör, and at Roeskilde.—Don't forget the names of the towns, as King Hroar said,—you shall speak well and clearly, little Tuk, and when at last you lie in your grave you shall sleep peacefully, as——"

"As if I lay in Soröe," said little Tuk, awaking. It was bright daylight, and he could not remember his dream; but that was not necessary, for we are not to know what will happen to us in the future. Then he sprang out of bed quickly, and read over his lesson in the book, and knew it all at once quite correctly. The old washerwoman put her head in at the door, and nodded to him quite kindly, and said, "Many thanks, you good child, for your help yesterday. I hope all your beautiful dreams will come true."

Little Tuk did not at all know what he had dreamt, but One above did.

Elder-Tree Mother.

THERE was once a little boy who had taken cold by going out and getting his feet wet. No one could think how he had managed to do so, for the weather was quite dry. His mother undressed him and put him to bed, and then she brought in the teapot to make him a good cup of elder-tea, which is so warming. At the same time, the friendly old man, who lived all alone at the top of the house, came in at the door. He had neither wife nor child, but he was very fond of children, and knew so many fairy tales and stories that it was a pleasure to hear him talk. "Now, if you drink your tea," said the mother, "very likely you will have a story in the mean time."

"Yes, if I could think of a new one to tell," said the old man. "But how did the little fellow get his feet wet?" asked he.

"Ah," said the mother, "that is what we cannot find out."

"Will you tell me a story?" asked the boy.

"Yes, if you can tell me exactly how deep the gutter is in the little street through which you go to school."

"Just halfway up to my knee," said the boy, "that is, if I stand in the deepest part."

"It is easy to see how we got our feet wet," said the old man. "Well, now I suppose I ought to tell a story, but I don't know any more."

"You can make up one, I know," said the boy. "Mother says that you can turn everything you look at into a story, and everything, even, that you touch."

"Ah, but those sorts of tales and stories are worth nothing. The real ones come of themselves; they knock at my forehead, and say, 'Here we are!'"

"Won't there be a knock soon?" said the boy. And his mother laughed, while she put elder-flowers in the teapot, and poured boiling water over them. "Oh, do tell me a story."

"Yes, if a story comes of itself; but tales and stories are very grand—they only come when it pleases them. Stop," he cried all at once, "here we have it; look! there is a story in the teapot now."

The little boy looked at the teapot, and saw the lid raise itself gradually, and long branches sprouted out, even from the spout, in all directions, till they became larger and larger, and there appeared a large elder-tree, covered with flowers white and fresh. It spread itself even to the bed, and pushed the curtains aside, and oh, how fragrant the blossoms smelt! In the midst of the tree sat a pleasant-looking old woman, in a very strange dress. The dress was green, like the leaves of the elder-tree, and was decorated with large white elder-blossoms. It was not easy to tell whether the border was made of some kind of stuff, or of real flowers.

"What is that woman's name?" asked the boy.

"The Romans and Greeks called her a dryad," said the old man, "but we do not understand that name; we have a better one

for her in the quarter of the town where the sailors live. They call her Elder-flower mother, and you must pay attention to her now, and listen while you look at the beautiful tree.

"Just such a large blooming tree as this stands outside in the corner of a poor little yard; and under this tree, one bright sunny afternoon, sat two old people—a sailor and his wife. They had great-grandchildren, and would soon celebrate the golden wedding, which is the fiftieth anniversary of the wedding-day, as I suppose you know, and the Elder-mother sat in the tree and looked as pleased as she does now. 'I know when the golden wedding is to be,' said she; but they did not hear her, they were talking of olden times. 'Do you remember,' said the old sailor, 'when we were quite little, and used to run about and play in the very same yard where we are now sitting, and how we planted little twigs in one corner, and made a garden?' 'Yes,' said the old woman, 'I remember it quite well, and how we watered the twigs, and one of them was a sprig of elder that took root, and put forth green shoots, until it became in time the great tree under which we old people are now seated.' 'To be sure,' he replied; 'and in that corner yonder stands the water-butt in which I used to swim my boat that I had cut out all myself, and it sailed well, too; but since then I have learnt a very different kind of sailing.' 'Yes, but before that, we went to school,' said she, 'and then we were prepared for confirmation,—how we both cried on that day! but in the afternoon, we went, hand in hand, up to the round tower, and saw the view over Copenhagen, and across the water; then we went to Fredericksburg, where the king and queen were sailing in their beautiful boat on the river.' 'But I had to sail on a very different voyage elsewhere, and be away from home for years on long voyages,' said the old sailor. 'Ah yes, and I used to cry about you,' said she, 'for I thought you must be dead, and lying drowned at the bottom of the sea, with the waves sweeping over you. And many a time have I got up in the night to see if the weathercock had turned; it turned often enough, but you came not. How well I remember one day! the rain was pouring down from the skies, and the man came to the house where I was in

service, to fetch away the dust. I went down to him with the dust-box, and stood for a moment at the door,—what shocking weather it was!—and while I stood there, the postman came up and brought me a letter from you. How that letter had travelled about! I tore it open and read it. I laughed and wept at the same time, I was so happy. It said that you were in warm countries, where the coffee berries grew, and what a beautiful country it was, and described many other wonderful things; and so I stood reading by the dust-bin, with the rain pouring down, when, all at once, somebody came, and clasped me round the waist.' 'Yes; and you gave him such a box on the ears, that they tingled,' said the old man. 'I did not know that it was you,' she replied, 'but you had arrived as quickly as your letter, and you looked so handsome, and, indeed, so you are still. You had a large yellow silk handkerchief in your pocket, and a shiny hat on your head. You looked quite fine. And, all the time, what weather it was! and how dismal the street looked!' 'And then do you remember,' said he, 'when we were married, and our first boy came, and then Marie, and Niels, and Peter, and Hans Christian?' 'Indeed, I do,' she replied; 'and they are all grown up respectable men and women, whom every one likes.' 'And now their children have little ones,' said the old sailor. 'There are great-grandchildren for us, strong and healthy too.' 'Was it not about this time of year that we were married?' 'Yes; and to-day is the golden wedding-day,' said Elder-tree mother, popping her head out just between the two old people; and they thought it was a neighbour nodding to them. Then they looked at each other, and clasped their hands together. Presently came their children and grandchildren, who knew very well that it was the golden wedding-day. They had already wished them joy on that very morning; but the old people had forgotten it, although they remembered so well all that had happened many years before. And the elder-tree smelt sweetly, and the setting sun shone upon the faces of the old people, till they looked quite ruddy; and the youngest of their grandchildren danced round them joyfully, and said they were going to have a feast in the evening, and there

were to be hot potatoes. Then the Elder-mother nodded in the tree, and cried, 'Hurrah,' with all the rest."

"But that is not a story," said the little boy, who had been listening.

"Not till you understand it," said the old man; "but let us ask the Elder-mother to explain it."

"It was not exactly a story," said the Elder-mother; "but the story is coming now, and it is a true one. For out of truth grow the most wonderful stories, just as my beautiful elder-bush has sprung out of the teapot." And then she took the little boy out of bed, and laid him on her bosom; and the blooming branches of elder closed over them, so that they sat as it were in a leafy bower; and the bower flew with them through the air in the most delightful manner. Then the Elder-mother all at once changed to a beautiful young maiden; but her dress was still of the same green stuff, ornamented with a border of white elder-blossoms, such as the Elder-mother had worn. In her bosom she wore a real elder-flower, and a wreath of the same was entwined in her golden ringlets. Her large blue eyes were very beautiful to look at. She was the same age as the boy; and they kissed each other, and felt very happy. They left the arbour together, hand in hand, and found themselves in a beautiful flower-garden, which, belonged to their home. On the green lawn their father's stick was tied up. There was life in this stick for the little ones; for no sooner did they place themselves upon it than the white knob changed into a pretty neighing head, with a black flowing mane, and four long slim legs sprung forth. The creature was strong and spirited, and galloped with them round the grass-plot. "Hurrah! now we will ride many miles away," said the boy; "we'll ride to the nobleman's estate, where we went last year." Then they rode round the grass-plot again; and the little maiden, who, we know, was Elder-tree mother, kept crying out, "Now we are in the country. Do you see the farmhouse, with a great baking-oven, which sticks out from the wall by the roadside like a gigantic egg? There is an elder spreading its branches over it, and a cock is marching about, and scratching for the chickens. See how he struts! Now

we are near the church. There it stands on the hill, shaded by the great oak-trees, one of which is half dead. See, here we are at the blacksmith's forge. How the fire burns! And the half-clad men are striking the hot iron with the hammer, so that the sparks fly about. Now then, away to the nobleman's beautiful estate." And the boy saw all that the little girl spoke of as she sat behind him on the stick; for it passed before him, although they were only galloping round the grass-plot. Then they played together in a side-walk, and raked up the earth, to make a little garden. She took elder-flowers out of her hair, and planted them; and they grew just like those which he had heard the old people talking about, and which they had planted in their young days. They walked about hand in hand, too, just as the old people had done when they were children; but they did not go up the round tower, nor to Fredericksburg garden. No; but the little girl seized the boy round the waist, and they rode all over the whole country, — sometimes it was spring, then summer, then autumn, and winter followed,—while thousands of images were presented to the boy's eyes and heart, and the little girl constantly sung to him, "You must never forget all this." And, through their whole flight, the elder-tree sent forth the sweetest fragrance.

They passed roses and fresh beech-trees, but the perfume of the elder-tree was stronger than all, for its flowers hung round the little maiden's heart, against which the boy so often leaned his head during their flight.

"It is beautiful here in the spring," said the maiden, as they stood in a grove of beech-trees covered with fresh green leaves, while at their feet the sweet-scented thyme and blushing anemone lay spread amid the green grass in delicate bloom. "Oh that it were always spring in the fragrant beech-groves!"

"Here it is delightful in summer," said the maiden, as they passed old knights' castles, telling of days gone by, and saw the high walls and pointed gables mirrored in the rivers beneath, where swans were sailing about and peeping into the cool green avenues. In the fields the corn waved to and fro like the sea. Red and yellow flowers grew amongst the ruins, and the hedges

were covered with wild hops and blooming convolvulus. In the evening the moon rose round and full, and the hay-stacks in the meadows filled the air with their sweet scent. These were scenes never to be forgotten. "It is lovely here also in autumn," said the little maiden; and then the scene changed. The sky appeared higher and more beautifully blue, while the forest glowed with colours of red, green, and gold. The hounds were off to the chase, large flocks of wild birds flew screaming over the Huns' graves, where the blackberry bushes twined round the old ruins. The dark blue sea was dotted with white sails, and in the barns sat old women, maidens, and children, picking hops into a large tub. The young ones sang songs, and the old ones told Fairy tales of wizards and witches. There could be nothing more pleasant than all this. "Again," said the maiden, "it is beautiful here in winter." Then in a moment all the trees were covered with hoar-frost, so that they looked like white coral. The snow crackled beneath the feet as if every one had on new boots, and one shooting star after another fell from the sky. In warm rooms there could be seen the Christmas trees decked out with presents, and lighted up amid festivities and joy. In the country farmhouses, could be heard the sound of the violin, and there were games for apples, so that even the poorest child could say, "It is beautiful in winter." And beautiful indeed were all the scenes which the maiden showed to the little boy, and always around them floated the fragrance of the elder-blossom, and ever above them waved the red flag with the white cross under which the old seaman had sailed. The boy who had become a youth, and who had gone as a sailor out into the wide world, and sailed to warm countries where the coffee grew, and to whom the little girl had given an elder-blossom from her bosom for a keepsake, when she took leave of him, placed the flower in his hymn-book, and when he opened it in foreign lands, he always turned to the spot where this flower of remembrance lay, and the more he looked at it, the fresher it appeared. He could, as it were, breathe the home-like fragrance of the woods, and see the little girl looking at him from between the petals of the flower with her

clear blue eyes, and hear her whispering, "It is beautiful here at home in spring, and summer, in autumn, and in winter," while hundreds of these home scenes passed through his memory. Many years had passed, and he was now an old man seated with his old wife under an elder-tree in full blossom. They were holding each other's hands just as the great-grandfather and grandmother had done, and spoke, as they did, of olden times and of the golden wedding." The little maiden with the blue eyes and the elder-blossoms in her hair sat in the tree and nodded to them and said "To-day is the golden wedding." And then she took two flowers out of her wreath and kissed them, and they shone first like silver and then like gold; and as she placed them on the heads of the old people each flower became a golden crown. And there they sat like a king and queen under the sweetly scented tree, which still looked like an elder-bush. Then he related to his old wife the story of the Elder-tree mother, just as he had heard it told when he was a little boy, and they both fancied it very much like their own story, especially in some parts which they liked the best.

"Well, and so it is," said the little maiden in the tree. "Some call me Elder-mother, others a dryad, but my real name is 'Memory.' It is I who sit in the tree as it grows and grows, and I can think of the past and relate many things. Let me see if you have still preserved the flower."

Then the old man opened his hymn-book, and there lay the elder-flower as fresh as if it had only just been placed there, and "Memory" nodded, and the two old people with the golden crowns on their heads sat in the red glow of the evening sunlight, and closed their eyes, and—and—the story was ended.

The little boy lay in his bed and did not quite know whether he had been dreaming or listening to a story. The teapot stood on the table, but no elder-bush grew out of it, and the old man who had really told the tale was on the threshold, and just going out at the door.

"How beautiful it was!" said the little boy. "Mother, I have been to warm countries."

"I can quite believe it," said his mother. "When any one drinks two full cups of elder-flower tea, he may well get into warm countries;" and then she covered him up that he should not take cold. "You have slept well while I have been disputing with the old man as to whether it was a real story or a fairy legend."

"And where is the Elder-tree mother?" asked the boy.

"She is in the teapot," said the mother, "and there she may stay."

The Snow Queen.

IN SEVEN STORIES.

Story the First.

WHICH describes a looking-glass and the broken fragments.

You must attend to the commencement of this story, for when we get to the end we shall know more than we do now about a very wicked hobgoblin; he was one of the very worst, for he was a real demon. One day, when he was in a merry mood, he made a looking-glass which had the power of making everything good or beautiful that was reflected in it almost shrink to nothing, while everything that was worthless and bad looked increased in size and worse than ever. The most lovely landscapes appeared like boiled spinach, and the people became hideous, and looked as if they stood on their heads and had no bodies. Their countenances were so distorted that no one could recognise them, and even one freckle on the face appeared to spread over the whole of the nose and mouth. The demon said this was very amusing. When a good or pious thought passed through the mind of any one, it was misrepresented in the glass; and then how the demon laughed at his cunning invention! All who went to the demon's school—for he kept a school—talked everywhere of the wonders they had seen, and declared that people could now, for the first time, see what the world and mankind were really like. They carried the glass about everywhere, till at last there was not a land nor a people who

had not been looked at through this distorted mirror. They wanted even to fly with it up to heaven to see the angels, but the higher they flew the more slippery the glass became, and they could scarcely hold it, till at last it slipped from their hands, fell to the earth, and was broken into millions of pieces. But now the looking-glass caused more unhappiness than ever, for some of the fragments were not so large as a grain of sand, and they flew about the world into every country. When one of these tiny atoms flew into a person's eye, it stuck there unknown to him, and from that moment he saw everything through a distorted medium, or could see only the worst side of what he looked at, for even the smallest fragment retained the same power which had belonged to the whole mirror. Some few persons even got a fragment of the looking-glass in their hearts, and this was very terrible, for their hearts became cold like a lump of ice. A few of the pieces were so large that they could be used as window-panes; it would have been a sad thing to look at our friends through them. Other pieces were made into spectacles; this was dreadful for those who wore them, for they could see nothing either rightly or justly. At all this the wicked demon laughed till his sides shook—it tickled him so to see the mischief he had done. There were still a number of these little fragments of glass floating about in the air, and now you shall hear what happened with one of them.

SECOND STORY.

A Little Boy and a Little Girl.

In a large town, full of houses and people, there is not room for everybody to have even a little garden, therefore they are obliged to be satisfied with a few flowers in flower-pots. In one of these large towns lived two poor children who had a garden something larger and better than a few flower-pots. They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other almost as much as if they had been. Their parents lived opposite to each other in two garrets, where the roofs of neighbouring houses projected out towards each other, and the water-pipe ran between them. In each house was a

little window, so that any one could step across the gutter from one window to the other. The parents of these children had each a large wooden box in which they cultivated kitchen herbs for their own use, and a little rose-bush in each box, which grew splendidly. Now after a while the parents decided to place these two boxes across the water-pipe, so that they reached from one window to the other and looked like two banks of flowers. Sweet-peas drooped over the boxes, and the rose-bushes shot forth long branches, which were trained round the windows and clustered together almost like a triumphal arch of leaves and flowers. The boxes were very high, and the children knew they must not climb upon them, without permission, but they were often, however, allowed to step out together and sit upon their little stools under the rose-bushes, or play quietly. In winter all this pleasure came to an end, for the windows were sometimes quite frozen over. But then they would warm copper pennies on the stove, and hold the warm pennies against the frozen pane; there would be very soon a little round hole through which they could peep, and the soft bright eyes of the little boy and girl would beam through the hole at each window as they looked at each other. Their names were Kay and Gerda. In summer they could be together with one jump from the window, but in winter they had to go up and down the long staircase and out through the snow before they could meet.

"See there are the white bees swarming," said Kay's old grandmother one day when it was snowing.

"Have they a queen bee?" asked the little boy, for he knew that the real bees always had a queen.

"To be sure they have," said the grandmother. "She is flying there where the swarm is thickest. She is the largest of them all, and never remains on the earth, but flies up to the dark clouds. Often at midnight she flies through the streets of the town, and looks in at the windows; then the ice freezes on the panes into wonderful shapes, that look like flowers and castles."

"Yes, I have seen them," said both the children, and they knew it must be true.

"Can the Snow Queen come in here?" asked the little girl.

"Only let her come," said the boy; "I'll set her on the stove, and then she'll melt."

Then the grandmother smoothed his hair and told him some more tales. One evening, when little Kay was at home, half undressed, he climbed on a chair by the window and peeped out through the little hole. A few flakes of snow were falling, and one of them, rather larger than the rest, alighted on the edge of one of the flower boxes. This snow-flake grew larger and larger till at last it became the figure of a woman, dressed in garments of white gauze, which looked like millions of starry snow-flakes linked together. She was fair and beautiful, but made of ice —shining and glittering ice. Still she was alive and her eyes sparkled like bright stars, but there was neither peace nor rest in their glance. She nodded towards the window, and waved her hand. The little boy was frightened and sprang from the chair; at the same moment it seemed as if a large bird flew by the window. On the following day there was a clear frost, and very soon came the spring. The sun shone; the young green leaves burst forth; the swallows built their nests; windows were opened, and the children sat once more in the garden on the roof, high above all the other rooms. How beautifully the roses blossomed this summer! The little girl had learnt a hymn in which roses were spoken of, and then she thought of their own roses, and she sang the hymn to the little boy, and he sang too:—

"Roses bloom and cease to be,
But we shall the Christ-child see."

Then the little ones held each other by the hand, and kissed the roses, and looked at the bright sunshine, and spoke to it as if the Christ-child were there. Those were splendid summer days. How beautiful and fresh it was out among the rose-bushes, which seemed as if they would never leave off blooming! One day Kay and Gerda sat looking at a book full of pictures of animals and birds, and then just as the clock in the church tower struck twelve, Kay said, "Oh, something has struck my heart!" and soon after, "There is something in my eye."

The little girl put her arm round his neck, and looked into his eye, but she could see nothing.

"I think it is gone," he said. But it was not gone; it was one of those bits of the looking-glass—that magic mirror, of which we have spoken—the ugly glass which made everything great and good appear small and ugly, while all that was wicked and bad became more visible, and every little fault could be plainly seen. Poor little Kay had also received a small grain in his heart, which very quickly turned to a lump of ice. He felt no more pain, but the glass was there still. "Why do you cry?" said he at last; "it makes you look ugly. There is nothing the matter with me now. Oh, see!" he cried suddenly, "that rose is worm-eaten, and this one is quite crooked. After all, they are ugly roses, just like the box in which they stand." And then he kicked the boxes with his foot, and pulled off the two roses.

"Kay, what are you doing?" cried the little girl; and then, when he saw how frightened she was, he tore off another rose, and jumped through his own window away from sweet little Gerda.

When she afterwards brought out the picture-book, he said, "It was only fit for babies in long clothes," and when grandmother told any stories, he would interrupt her with "but;" or, when he could manage it, he would get behind her chair, put on a pair of spectacles, and imitate her very cleverly, to make people laugh. By-and-by he began to mimic the speech and gait of persons in the street. All that was peculiar or disagreeable in a person he would imitate directly, and people said, "That boy will be very clever; he has a remarkable genius." But it was the piece of glass in his eye, and the coldness in his heart, that made him act like this. He would even tease little Gerda, who loved him with all her heart. His games, too, were quite different; they were not so childish. One winter's day, when it snowed, he brought out a burning-glass, then he held out the tail of his blue coat, and let the snowflakes fall upon it. "Look in this glass, Gerda," said he; and she saw how every flake of snow was magnified, and looked like a beautiful flower or a glittering star. "Is it not clever?" said Kay, "and much more interesting than

looking at real flowers. There is not a single fault in it, and the snow-flakes are quite perfect till they begin to melt."

Soon after, Kay made his appearance in large thick gloves, and with his sledge at his back. He called upstairs to Gerda, "I've got leave to go into the great square, where the other boys play and ride." And away he went.

In the great square, the boldest among the boys would often tie their sledges to country people's carts, and go with them a good way. This was capital. But while they were all amusing themselves, and Kay with them, a great sledge came by; it was painted white, and in it sat some one wrapped in a rough white fur, and wearing a white cap. The sledge drove twice round the square, and Kay fastened his own little sledge to it, so that when it went away, he followed with it. It went faster and faster right through the next street, and then the person who drove turned round and nodded pleasantly to Kay, just as if they were acquainted with each other, but whenever Kay wished to loosen his little sledge the driver nodded again, so Kay sat still, and they drove out through the town gate. Then the snow began to fall so heavily that the little boy could not see a hand's breadth before him, but still they drove on; then he suddenly loosened the cord so that the large sledge might go on without him, but it was of no use, his carriage held fast, and away they went like the wind. Then he called out loudly, but nobody heard him, while the snow beat upon him, and the sledge flew onwards. Every now and then it gave a jump as if they were going over hedges and ditches. The boy was frightened, and tried to say a prayer, but he could remember nothing but the multiplication table.

The snow-flakes became larger and larger till they appeared like great white chickens. All at once they sprang on one side, the great sledge stopped, and the person who had driven it rose up. The fur and the cap, which were made entirely of snow, fell off, and he saw a lady, tall and white: it was the Snow Queen.

"We have driven well," said she; "but why do you tremble? Here, creep into my warm fur." Then she seated him beside her

in the sledge, and as she wrapped the fur round him he felt as if he were sinking into a snowdrift.

"Are you still cold?" she asked, as she kissed him on the forehead. The kiss was colder than ice; it went quite through to his heart, which was already almost a lump of ice; he felt as if he were going to die, but only for a moment; he soon seemed quite well again, and did not notice the cold all around him.

"My sledge! don't forget my sledge," was his first thought, and then he looked and saw that it was bound fast to one of the white chickens, which flew behind him with the sledge at its back. The Snow Queen kissed little Kay again, and by this time he had forgotten little Gerda, his grandmother, and all at home.

"Now you must have no more kisses," she said, "or I should kiss you to death."

Kay looked at her, and saw that she was so beautiful, he could not imagine a more intelligent and lovely face; she did not now seem to be made of ice, as when he had seen her through his window, and she had nodded to him. In his eyes she was perfect, and he did not feel at all afraid. He told her he could do mental arithmetic, as far as fractions, and that he knew the number of square miles and the number of inhabitants in the country. And she always smiled so that he thought he did not know enough yet, and looked round the vast expanse as she flew higher and higher with him upon a black cloud, while the storm blew and howled as if it were singing old songs. They flew over woods and lakes, over sea and land; below them roared the wild wind; the wolves howled and the snow crackled; over them flew the black screaming crows, and above all shone the moon, clear and bright,—and so Kay passed through the long winter's night, and by day he slept at the feet of the Snow Queen.

THIRD STORY.

The Flower Garden of the Woman who could Conjure.

But how fared little Gerda during Kay's absence? What had become of him, no one knew, nor could any one give the slightest

information, excepting the boys, who said that he had tied his sledge to another very large one, which had driven through the street, and out at the town gate. Nobody knew where it went; many tears were shed for him, and little Gerda wept bitterly for a long time. She said she knew he must be dead, that he was drowned in the river which flowed close by the school. Oh, indeed, those long winter days were very dreary! But at last spring came, with warm sunshine. "Kay is dead and gone," said little Gerda.

"I don't believe it," said the sunshine.

"He is dead and gone," she said to the sparrows.

"We don't believe it," they replied; and at last little Gerda began to doubt it herself. "I will put on my new red shoes," she said one morning, "those that Kay has never seen, and then I will go down to the river, and ask for him." It was quite early when she kissed her old grandmother, who was still asleep; then she put on her red shoes, and went quite alone out of the town gates towards the river. "Is it true that you have taken my little playmate away from me?" she said to the river. "I will give you my red shoes if you will give him back to me." And it seemed as if the waves nodded to her in a strange manner. Then she took off her red shoes, which she liked better than anything else, and threw them both into the river; but they fell near the bank, and the little waves carried them back to land, just as if the river would not take from her what she loved best, because they could not give her back little Kay. But she thought the shoes had not been thrown out far enough. Then she crept into a boat that lay among the reeds, and threw the shoes again from the farther end of the boat into the water, but it was not fastened, and her movement sent it gliding away from the land. When she saw this, she hastened to reach the end of the boat, but before she could do so, it was more than a yard from the bank, and drifting away faster than ever. Little Gerda was very much frightened, and began to cry, but no one heard her except the sparrows, and they could not carry her to land, but they flew along by the shore, and sang, as if to comfort her, "Here we are! Here we are!" The boat

floated with the stream ; little Gerda sat quite still with only her stockings on her feet ; the red shoes floated after her, but she could not reach them because the boat kept so much in advance. The banks on each side of the river were very pretty. There were beautiful flowers, old trees, sloping fields, in which cows and sheep were grazing, but not a man to be seen. Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay, thought Gerda, and then she became more cheerful, and raised her head, and looked at the beautiful green banks ; and so the boat sailed on for hours. At length she came to a large cherry orchard, in which stood a small house with strange red and blue windows. It had also a thatched roof, and outside were two wooden soldiers, that presented arms to her as she sailed past. Gerda called out to them, for she thought they were alive, but of course they did not answer ; and as the boat drifted nearer to the shore, she saw what they really were. Then Gerda called still louder, and there came a very old woman out of the house, leaning on a crutch. She wore a large hat to shade her from the sun, and on it were painted all sorts of pretty flowers. "You poor little child," said the old woman, "how did you manage to come all this distance into the wide world on such a rapid rolling stream ?" And then the old woman walked into the water, seized the boat with her crutch, drew it to land, and lifted little Gerda out. And Gerda was glad to feel herself again on dry ground, although she was rather afraid of the strange old woman. "Come and tell me who you are," said she, "and how you came here."

Then Gerda told her everything, while the old woman shook her head, and said, "Hem-hem ;" and when she had finished, Gerda asked if she had not seen little Kay, and the old woman told her he had not passed by that way, but he very likely would come. So she told Gerda not to be sorrowful, but to taste the cherries and look at the flowers ; they were better than any picture-book, for each of them could tell a story. The old woman took Gerda by the hand, and led her into the little house, and closed the door. The windows were very high, and as the panes were red, blue, and yellow, the daylight shone through them in all sorts of singular colours. On the table stood some beautiful cherries,

and Gerda had permission to eat as many as she would. While she was eating them, the old woman combed out her long flaxen ringlets with a golden comb, and the glossy curls hung down on each side of the little round pleasant face, which looked fresh and blooming as a rose. "I have long been wishing for a dear little maiden like you," said the old woman, "and now you must stay with me, and see how happily we shall live together." And while she went on combing little Gerda's hair, she thought less and less about her adopted brother Kay, for the old woman could conjure, although she was not a wicked witch; she conjured only a little for her own amusement, and now, because she wanted to keep Gerda. Therefore she went into the garden, and stretched out her crutch towards all the rose-trees, beautiful though they were, and they immediately sunk into the dark earth, so that no one could tell where they had once stood, for the old woman was afraid that if little Gerda saw roses, she would think of those at home, and then remember little Kay, and run away. Then she took Gerda into the flower-garden. How fragrant and beautiful it was! Every flower that could be thought of for every season of the year was here in full bloom; no picture-book could have more beautiful colours. Gerda jumped for joy, and played till the sun went down behind the tall cherry-trees; then she slept in an elegant bed with red silk pillows, embroidered with coloured violets, and dreamed as pleasantly as a queen on her wedding-day. The next day, and for many days after, Gerda played with the flowers in the warm sunshine. She knew every flower, and yet, although there were so many of them, it seemed as if one were missing, but which it was she could not tell. One day, however, as she sat looking at the old woman's hat with the painted flowers on it, she saw that the prettiest of them all was a rose. The old woman had forgotten to take it from her hat when she made all the roses sink into the earth. But it is difficult to keep the thoughts together in everything; one little mistake upsets all our arrangements.

"What, are there no roses here?" cried Gerda; and she ran out into the garden, and examined all the beds, and searched and searched. There was not one to be found. Then she sat down

and wept, and her tears fell just on the place where one of the rose-trees had sunk down. The warm tears moistened the earth, and the rose-tree sprouted up at once, as blooming as when it had sunk; and Gerda embraced it, and kissed the roses, and thought of the beautiful roses at home, and, with them, of little Kay.

"Oh, how I have been detained!" said the little maiden. "I wanted to seek for little Kay. Do you know where he is?" she asked the roses; "do you think he is dead?"

And the roses answered, "No, he is not dead. We have been in the ground where all the dead lie; but Kay is not there."

"Thank you," said little Gerda, and then she went to the other flowers, and looked into their little cups, and asked, "Do you know where little Kay is?" But each flower, as it stood in the sunshine, dreamed only of its own little fairy tale or history. Not one knew anything of Kay. Gerda heard many stories from the flowers, as she asked them one after another about him.

And what said the tiger-lily? "Hark, do you hear the drum?—'tum, tum,'—there are only two notes always, 'tum, tum.' Listen to the women's song of mourning! Hear the cry of the priest! In her long red robe stands the Hindoo widow by the funeral pile. The flames rise around her as she places herself on the dead body of her husband; but the Hindoo woman is thinking of the living one in that circle; of him, her son, who lighted those flames. Those shining eyes trouble her heart more painfully than the flames which will soon consume her body to ashes. Can the fire of the heart be extinguished in the flames of a funeral pile?"

"I don't understand that at all," said little Gerda.

"That is my story," said the tiger-lily.

What says the convolvulus? "Near yonder narrow road stands an old knight's castle; thick ivy creeps over the old ruined walls, leaf over leaf, even to the balcony, in which stands a beautiful maiden. She bends over the balustrades, and looks up the road. No rose on its stem is fresher than she; no apple-blossom, wafted by the wind, floats more lightly than she moves. Her rich silk rustles as she bends over and exclaims, 'Will he not come?'"

"Is it Kay you mean?" asked Gerda.

"I am only speaking of a story of my dream," replied the flower.

What said the little snowdrop? "Between two trees a rope is hanging; there is a piece of board upon it; it is a swing. Two pretty little girls, in dresses white as snow, and with long green ribbons fluttering from their hats, are sitting upon it, swinging. Their brother, who is taller than they are, stands in the swing; he has one arm round the rope, to steady himself; in one hand he holds a little bowl, and in the other a clay pipe; he is blowing bubbles. As the swing goes on, the bubbles fly upward, reflecting the most beautiful varying colours. The last still hangs from the bowl of the pipe, and sways in the wind. On goes the swing; and then a little black dog comes running up. He is almost as light as the bubble, and he raises himself on his hind legs, and wants to be taken into the swing; but it does not stop, and the dog falls; then he barks, and gets angry. The children stoop toward him, and the bubble bursts. A swinging plank, a light sparkling foam picture,—that is my story."

"It may be all very pretty what you are telling me," said little Gerda; "but you speak so mournfully, and you do not mention little Kay at all."

What do the hyacinths say? "There were three beautiful sisters, fair and delicate. The dress of one was red, of the second blue, and of the third pure white. Hand in hand, they danced in the bright moonlight, by the calm lake; but they were human beings, not fairy elves. The sweet fragrance attracted them, and they disappeared in the wood; here the fragrance became stronger. Three coffins, in which lay the three beautiful maidens, glided from the thickest part of the forest across the lake. The fire-flies flew lightly over them, like little floating torches. Do the dancing maidens sleep, or are they dead? The scent of the flowers says that they are corpses. The evening bell tolls their knell."

"You make me quite sorrowful," said little Gerda; "your perfume is so strong, you make me think of the dead maidens.

Ah! is little Kay really dead then? The roses have been in the earth, and they say no."

"Cling, clang," tolled the hyacinth bells. "We are not tolling for little Kay; we do not know him. We sing our song, the only one we know."

Then Gerda went to the buttercups that were glittering amongst the bright green leaves.

"You are little bright suns," said Gerda; "tell me if you know where I can find my playfellow."

And the buttercups sparkled gaily, and looked again at Gerda. What song could the buttercups sing? It was not about Kay.

"The bright warm sun shone on a little court, on the first warm day of spring. His bright beams rested on the white walls of the neighbouring house; and close by bloomed the first yellow flower of the season, glittering like gold in the sun's warm ray. An old woman sat in her arm-chair at the house-door, and her granddaughter, a poor and pretty servant-maid, came to see her for a short visit. When she kissed her grandmother, there was gold everywhere: the gold of the heart in that holy kiss; it was a golden morning; there was gold in the beaming sunlight, gold in the leaves of the lowly flower, and on the lips of the maiden. There, that is my story," said the buttercup.

"My poor old grandmother!" sighed Gerda; "she is longing to see me, and grieving for me as she did for little Kay; but I shall soon go home now, and take little Kay with me. It is no use asking the flowers; they know only their own songs, and can give me no information."

And then she tucked up her little dress, that she might run faster; but the narcissus caught her by the leg as she was jumping over it; so she stopped and looked at the tall yellow flower, and said, "Perhaps you may know something."

Then she stooped down quite close to the flower, and listened; and what did it say?

"I can see myself, I can see myself," said the narcissus. "Oh, how sweet is my perfume! Up in a little room with a bow-window, stands a little dancing girl, half undressed; she stands

sometimes on one leg, and sometimes on both, and looks as if she would tread the whole world under her feet. She is nothing but a delusion. She is pouring water out of a tea-pot on a piece of stuff which she holds in her hand ; it is her boddice. 'Cleanliness is a good thing,' she says. Her white dress hangs on a peg ; it has also been washed in the tea-pot, and dried on the roof. She puts it on, and ties a saffron-coloured handkerchief round her neck, which makes the dress look whiter. See how she stretches out her legs, as if she were showing off on a stem. I can see myself, I can see myself."

"What do I care for all that," said Gerda, "you need not tell me such stuff." And then she ran to the other end of the garden. The door was fastened, but she pressed against the rusty latch, and it gave way. The door sprang open, and little Gerda ran out with bare feet into the wide world. She looked back three times, but no one seemed to be following her. At last she could run no longer, so she sat down to rest on a great stone, and when she looked round she saw that the summer was over, and autumn very far advanced. She had known nothing of this in the beautiful garden, where the sun shone and the flowers grew all the year round.

"Oh, how I have wasted my time!" said little Gerda ; "it is autumn. I must not rest any longer," and she rose up to go on. But her little feet were wounded and sore, and everything around her looked so cold and bleak. The long willow-leaves were quite yellow. The dew-drops fell like water, leaf after leaf dropped from the trees, the sloe-thorn alone still bore fruit, but the sloes were sour, and set the teeth on edge. Oh, how dark and weary the whole world appeared!

FOURTH STORY.

The Prince and Princess.

Gerda was obliged to rest again, and just opposite the place where she sat, she saw a great crow come hopping across the snow towards her. He stood looking at her for some time, and then

he wagged his head and said, "Caw, caw; good-day, good-day." He pronounced the words as plainly as he could, because he meant to be kind to the little girl; and then he asked her where she was going all alone in the wide world.

The word *alone* Gerda understood very well, and knew how much it expressed. So then she told the crow the whole story of her life and adventures, and asked him if he had seen little Kay.

The crow nodded his head very gravely, and said, "Perhaps I have—it may be."

"No! Do you think you have?" cried little Gerda, and she kissed the crow, and hugged him almost to death with joy.

"Gently, gently," said the crow. "I believe I know. I think it may be little Kay; but he has certainly forgotten you by this time for the princess."

"Does he live with a princess?" asked Gerda.

"Yes, listen," replied the crow; "but it is so difficult to speak your language. If you understand the crows' language * then I can explain it better. Do you?"

"No, I have never learnt it," said Gerda, "but my grandmother understands it, and used to speak it to me. I wish I had learnt it."

"It does not matter," answered the crow; "I will explain as well as I can, although it will be very badly done;" and he told her what he had heard. "In this kingdom where we now are," said he, "there lives a princess, who is so wonderfully clever that she has read all the newspapers in the world, and forgotten them too, although she is so clever. A short time ago, as she was sitting on her throne, which people say is not such an agreeable seat as is often supposed, she began to sing a song which commences in these words:

'Why should I not be married?'

'Why not indeed?' said she, and so she determined to marry if

* Children have a kind of language, or gibberish, which is sometimes called "crows' language;" it is formed by adding letters or syllables to every word.

she could find a husband who knew what to say when he was spoken to, and not one who could only look grand, for that was so tiresome. Then she assembled all her court ladies together at the beat of the drum, and when they heard of her intentions they were very much pleased. 'We are so glad to hear it,' said they, 'we were talking about it ourselves the other day.' You may believe that every word I tell you is true," said the crow, "for I have a tame sweetheart who goes freely about the palace, and she told me all this."

Of course his sweetheart was a crow, for "birds of a feather flock together," and one crow always chooses another crow.

"Newspapers were published immediately, with a border of hearts, and the initials of the princess among them. They gave notice that every young man who was handsome was free to visit the castle and speak with the princess; and those who could reply loud enough to be heard when spoken to, were to make themselves quite at home at the palace; but the one who spoke best would be chosen as a husband for the princess. Yes, yes, you may believe me, it is all as true as I sit here," said the crow. "The people came in crowds. There was a great deal of crushing and running about, but no one succeeded either on the first or the second day. They could all speak very well while they were outside in the streets, but when they entered the palace gates, and saw the guards in silver uniforms, and the footmen in their golden livery on the staircase, and the great halls lighted up, they became quite confused. And when they stood before the throne on which the princess sat, they could do nothing but repeat the last words she had said; and she had no particular wish to hear her own words over again. It was just as if they had all taken something to make them sleepy while they were in the palace, for they did not recover themselves nor speak till they got back again into the street. There was quite a long line of them reaching from the town gate to the palace. I went myself to see them," said the crow. "They were hungry and thirsty, for at the palace they did not get even a glass of water. Some of the wisest had taken a few slices of bread and butter with them, but they did not share it with their neighbours; they thought

if they went in to the princess looking hungry, there would be a better chance for themselves."

"But Kay! tell me about little Kay!" said Gerda, "was he amongst the crowd?"

"Stop a bit, we are just coming to him. It was on the third day, there came marching cheerfully along to the palace a little personage, without horses or carriage, his eyes sparkling like yours; he had beautiful long hair, but his clothes were very poor."

"That was Kay!" said Gerda joyfully. "Oh, then I have found him;" and she clapped her hands.

"He had a little knapsack on his back," added the crow.

"No, it must have been his sledge," said Gerda; "for he went away with it."

"It may have been so," said the crow; "I did not look at it very closely. But I know from my tame sweetheart that he passed through the palace gates, saw the guards in their silver uniform, and the servants in their liveries of gold on the stairs, but he was not in the least embarrassed. 'It must be very tiresome to stand on the stairs,' he said. 'I prefer to go in.' The rooms were blazing with light. Councillors and ambassadors walked about with bare feet, carrying golden vessels; it was enough to make any one feel serious. His boots creaked loudly as he walked, and yet he was not at all uneasy."

"It must be Kay," said Gerda, "I know he had new boots on, I heard them creak in grandmother's room."

"They really did creak," said the crow, "yet he went boldly up to the princess herself, who was sitting on a pearl as large as a spinning wheel, and all the ladies of the court were present with their maids, and all the cavaliers with their servants; and each of the maids had another maid to wait upon her, and the cavaliers' servants had their own servants as well as a page each. They all stood in circles round the princess, and the nearer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked. The servants' pages, who always wore slippers, could hardly be looked at, they held themselves up so proudly by the door."

"It must be quite awful," said little Gerda, "but did Kay win the princess?"

"If I had not been a crow," said he, "I would have married her myself, although I am engaged. He spoke just as well as I do, when I speak the crows' language, so I heard from my tame sweetheart. He was quite free and agreeable, and said he had not come to woo the princess, but to hear her wisdom; and he was as pleased with her as she was with him."

"Oh certainly that was Kay," said Gerda, "he was so clever;



"HE WENT BOLDLY UP TO THE PRINCESS HERSELF."—*p.* 105.

he could work mental arithmetic and fractions. Oh, will you take me to the palace?"

"It is very easy to ask that," replied the crow, "but how are we to manage it? However, I will speak about it to my tame sweetheart, and ask her advice; for I must tell you it will be very difficult to gain permission for a little girl like you to enter the palace."

"Oh, yes; but I shall gain permission easily," said Gerda, "for when Kay hears that I am here, he will come out and fetch me in immediately."

"Wait for me here by the palings," said the crow, wagging his head as he flew away.

It was late in the evening before the crow returned. "Caw, caw," he said, "she sends you greeting, and here is a little roll which she took from the kitchen for you; there is plenty of bread there, and she thinks you must be hungry. It is not possible for you to enter the palace by the front entrance. The guards in silver uniform and the servants in gold livery would not allow it. But do not cry, we will manage to get you in; my sweetheart knows a little back-staircase that leads to the sleeping apartments, and she knows where to find the key."

Then they went into the garden through the great avenue, where the leaves were falling one after another, and they could see the lights in the palace being put out in the same manner. And the crow led little Gerda to a back door, which stood ajar. Oh! how little Gerda's heart beat with anxiety and longing; it was just as if she were going to do something wrong, and yet she only wanted to know where little Kay was. "It must be he," she thought, "with those clear eyes, and that long hair." She could fancy she saw him smiling at her, as he used to at home, when they sat among the roses. He would certainly be glad to see her, and to hear what a long distance she had come for his sake, and to know how sorry they had all been at home because he did not come back. Oh what joy and yet fear she felt! They were now on the stairs, and in a small closet at the top a lamp was burning. In the middle of the floor stood the tame crow, turning her head from side to side, and gazing at Gerda, who curtsied as her grandmother had taught her to do.

"My betrothed has spoken so very highly of you, my little lady," said the tame crow, "your life-history, *Vita*, as it may be called, is very touching. If you will take the lamp, I will walk before you. We will go straight along this way, then we shall meet no one."

"It seems to me as if somebody were behind us," said Gerda, as something rushed by her like a shadow on the wall, and then horses with flying manes and thin legs, hunters, ladies and gentlemen on horseback, glided by her, like shadows on the wall.

"They are only dreams," said the crow, "they are coming to fetch the thoughts of the great people out hunting."

"All the better, for we shall be able to look at them in their beds more safely. I hope that when you rise to honour and favour, you will show a grateful heart."

"You may be quite sure of that," said the crow from the forest.

They now came into the first hall, the walls of which were hung with rose-coloured satin, embroidered with flowers. Here the dreams again flitted by them, but so quickly that Gerda could not distinguish the royal persons. Each hall appeared more splendid than the last, it was enough to bewilder any one. At length they reached a bedroom. The ceiling was like a great palm-tree, with glass leaves of the most costly crystal, and over the centre of the floor two beds, each resembling a lily, hung from a stem of gold. One, in which the princess lay, was white, the other was red ; and in this Gerda had to seek for little Kay. She pushed one of the red leaves aside, and saw a little brown neck. Oh, that must be Kay ! She called his name out quite loud, and held the lamp over him. The dreams rushed back into the room on horseback. He woke, and turned his head round, it was not little Kay ! The prince was only like him in the neck, still he was young and pretty. Then the princess peeped out of her white-lily bed, and asked what was the matter. Then little Gerda wept and told her story, and all that the crows had done to help her.

"You poor child," said the prince and princess ; then they praised the crows, and said they were not angry with them for what they had done, but that it must not happen again, and this time they should be rewarded.

"Would you like to have your freedom ?" asked the princess, "or would you prefer to be raised to the position of court crows, with all that is left in the kitchen for yourselves ?"

Then both the crows bowed, and begged to have a fixed appointment, for they thought of their old age, and said it would be so comfortable to feel that they had provision for their old

days, as they called it. And then the prince got out of his bed, and gave it up to Gerda,—he could not do more; and she lay down. She folded her little hands, and thought, "How good everybody is to me, men and animals too;" then she closed her eyes and fell into a sweet sleep. All the dreams came flying back again to her, and they looked like angels, and one of them drew a little sledge, on which sat Kay, and nodded to her. But all this was only a dream, and vanished as soon as she awoke.

The following day she was dressed from head to foot in silk and velvet, and they invited her to stay at the palace for a few days, and enjoy herself; but she only begged for a pair of boots, and a little carriage, and a horse to draw it, so that she might go out into the wide world to seek for Kay. She obtained, not only boots, but also a muff, and was neatly dressed; and when she was ready to go, she found at the door a coach, made of pure gold, with the coat-of-arms of the prince and princess shining upon it like a star, and the coachman, footman, and outriders all wearing golden crowns on their heads. The prince and princess themselves helped her into the coach, and wished her success. The forest crow, who was now married, accompanied her for the first three miles; he sat by Gerda's side, as he could not bear riding backwards. The tame crow stood in the doorway flapping her wings. She could not go with them, because she had been suffering from headache ever since the new appointment, no doubt from eating too much. The coach was well stored with sweet cakes, and under the seat were fruit and gingerbread nuts. "Farewell, farewell," cried the prince and princess, and little Gerda wept, and the crow wept; and then, after a few miles, the crow also said "Farewell," and this was the saddest parting. However, he flew to a tree, and stood flapping his black wings as long as he could see the coach, which glittered in the bright sunshine.

FIFTH STORY.

The Little Robber-Girl.

THE coach drove on through a thick forest, lighting up the way like a torch, and dazzling the eyes of some robbers, who could not bear to let it pass them unmolested.

"It is gold! it is gold!" cried they, rushing forward, and seizing the horses. Then they struck the little jockeys, the coachman, and the footman dead, and pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is fat and pretty, as if she had been fed with the kernels of nuts," said the old robber-woman, who had a long beard and eyebrows that hung over her eyes. "She is as good as a little lamb; how nice she will taste!" and as she said this, she drew forth a shining knife, that glittered horribly. "Oh!" screamed the old woman at the same moment; for her own daughter, who held her back, had bitten her in the ear. She was a wild and naughty girl, and the mother called her an ugly thing, but had not time to kill Gerda.

"She shall play with me," said the little robber-girl; "she shall give me her muff and her pretty dresses, and sleep with me in my bed." And then she bit her mother again, and made her spring in the air, and jump about; and all the robbers laughed, and said, "See how she is dancing with her young cub."

"I will have a ride in the coach," said the little robber-girl; and she would have her own way; for she was self-willed and obstinate.

She and Gerda seated themselves in the coach, and drove away, over stumps and stones, into the depths of the forest. The little robber-girl was about the same size as Gerda, but stronger; she had broader shoulders and a darker skin; her eyes were quite black, and she had a mournful look. She clasped little Gerda round the waist, and said,—

"They shall not kill you as long as you don't make me vexed with you. I suppose you are a princess."

"No," said Gerda; and then she told her all her history, and how fond she was of little Kay.

The robber-girl looked earnestly at her, nodded her head slightly, and said, "They shan't kill you, even if I do get angry with you; for I will do it myself." And then she wiped Gerda's eyes, and stuck her own hands in the beautiful muff which was so soft and warm.

The coach stopped in the courtyard of a robber's castle, the walls of which were cracked from top to bottom. Ravens and crows flew in and out of the holes and crevices, while great bull-dogs, either of which looked as if it could swallow a man, were jumping about; but they were not allowed to bark. In the large old smoky hall a bright fire was burning on the stone floor. There was no chimney; so the smoke went up to the ceiling, and found a way out for itself. Soup was boiling in a large cauldron, and hares and rabbits were roasting on the spit.

"You shall sleep with me and all my little animals to-night," said the robber-girl, after they had had something to eat and drink. So she took Gerda to a corner of the hall, where some straw and carpets were laid down. Above them, on laths and perches, were more than a hundred pigeons, who all seemed to be asleep, although they moved slightly when the two little girls came near them. "These all belong to me," said the robber-girl; and she seized the nearest to her, held it by the feet, and shook it till it flapped its wings. "Kiss it," cried she, flapping it in Gerda's face. "There sit the wood-pigeons," continued she, pointing to a number of laths and a cage which had been fixed into the walls, near one of the openings. "Both rascals would fly away directly, if they were not closely locked up. And here is my old sweetheart 'Ba;'" and she dragged out a reindeer by the horn; he wore a bright copper ring round his neck, and was tied up. "We are obliged to hold him tight too, or else he would run away from us also. I tickle his neck every evening with my sharp knife, which frightens him very much." And then the robber-girl drew a long knife from a chink in the wall, and let it slide gently over the reindeer's neck. The poor animal began to kick, and the little

robber-girl laughed, and pulled down Gerda into bed with her.

"Will you have that knife with you while you are asleep?" asked Gerda, looking at it in great fright.

"I always sleep with the knife by me," said the robber-girl. "No one knows what may happen. But now tell me again all about little Kay, and why you went out into the world."

Then Gerda repeated her story over again, while the wood-pigeons in the cage over her cooed, and the other pigeons slept. The little robber-girl put one arm across Gerda's neck, and held the knife in the other, and was soon fast asleep and snoring. But Gerda could not close her eyes at all; she knew not whether she was to live or die. The robbers sat round the fire, singing and drinking, and the old woman stumbled about. It was a terrible sight for a little girl to witness.

Then the wood-pigeons said, "Coo, coo; we have seen little Kay. A white fowl carried his sledge, and he sat in the carriage of the Snow Queen, which drove through the wood while we were lying in our nest. She blew upon us, and all the young ones died excepting us two. Coo, coo."

"What are you saying up there?" cried Gerda. "Where was the Snow Queen going? Do you know anything about it?"

"She was most likely travelling to Lapland, where there is always snow and ice. Ask the reindeer that is fastened up there with a rope."

"Yes, there is always snow and ice," said the reindeer; "and it is a glorious place; you can leap and run about freely on the sparkling icy plains. The Snow Queen has her summer tent there, but her strong castle is at the North Pole, on an island called Spitzbergen."

"Oh, Kay, little Kay!" sighed Gerda.

"Lie still," said the robber-girl, "or I shall run my knife into your body."

In the morning Gerda told her all that the wood-pigeons had said; and the little robber-girl looked quite serious, and nodded

her head, and said, "That is all talk, that is all talk. Do you know where Lapland is?" she asked the reindeer.

"Who should know better than I do?" said the animal, while his eyes sparkled. "I was born and brought up there, and used to run about the snow-covered plains."

"Now listen," said the robber-girl; "all our men are gone away,—only mother is here, and here she will stay; but at noon she always drinks out of a great bottle, and afterwards sleeps for a little while; and then I'll do something for you." Then she jumped out of bed, clasped her mother round the neck, and pulled her by the beard, crying, "My own little nanny goat, good morning." Then her mother filliped her nose till it was quite red; yet she did it all for love.

When the mother had drunk out of the bottle, and was gone to sleep, the little robber-maiden went to the reindeer, and said, "I should like very much to tickle your neck a few times more with my knife, for it makes you look so funny; but never mind,—I will untie your cord, and set you free, so that you may run away to Lapland; but you must make good use of your legs, and carry this little maiden to the castle of the Snow Queen, where her playfellow is. You have heard what she told me, for she spoke loud enough, and you were listening."

Then the reindeer jumped for joy; and the little robber-girl lifted Gerda on his back, and had the forethought to tie her on, and even to give her her own little cushion to sit on.

"Here are your fur boots for you," said she; "for it will be very cold; but I must keep the muff: it is so pretty. However, you shall not be frozen for the want of it; here are my mother's large warm mittens; they will reach up to your elbows. Let me put them on. There, now your hands look just like my mother's."

But Gerda wept for joy.

"I don't like to see you fret," said the little robber-girl; "you ought to look quite happy now; and here are two loaves and a ham, so that you need not starve." These were fastened on the reindeer, and then the little robber-maiden opened the door,

coaxed in all the great dogs, and then cut the string with which the reindeer was fastened, with her sharp knife, and said, "Now run, but mind you take good care of the little girl." And then Gerda stretched out her hand, with the great mitten on it, towards



GERDA TRAVELLING TO LAPLAND.

the little robber-girl, and said, "Farewell," and away flew the reindeer, over stumps and stones, through the great forest, over marshes and plains, as quickly as he could. The wolves howled, and the ravens screamed; while up in the sky quivered red

lights like flames of fire. "There are my old northern lights," said the reindeer; "see how they flash." And he ran on day and night still faster and faster, but the loaves and the ham were all eaten by the time they reached Lapland.

SIXTH STORY.

The Lapland Woman and the Finland Woman.

They stopped at a little hut; it was very mean looking; the roof sloped nearly down to the ground, and the door was so low that the family had to creep in on their hands and knees, when they went in and out. There was no one at home but an old Lapland woman, who was cooking fish by the light of a train-oil lamp. The reindeer told her all about Gerda's story, after having first told his own, which seemed to him the most important, but Gerda was so pinched with the cold that she could not speak. "Oh, you poor things," said the Lapland woman, "you have a long way to go yet. You must travel more than a hundred miles further, to Finland. The Snow Queen lives there now, and she burns Bengal lights every evening. I will write a few words on a dried stock-fish, for I have no paper, and you can take it from me to the Finland woman who lives there; she can give you better information than I can." So when Gerda was warmed, and had taken something to eat and drink, the woman wrote a few words on the dried fish, and told Gerda to take great care of it. Then she tied her again on the reindeer, and he set off at full speed. Flash, flash, went the beautiful blue northern lights in the air the whole night long. And at length they reached Finland, and knocked at the chimney of the Finland woman's hut, for it had no door above the ground. They crept in, but it was so terribly hot inside that the woman wore scarcely any clothes; she was small and very dirty looking. She loosened little Gerda's dress, and took off the fur boots and the mittens, or Gerda would have been unable to bear the heat; and then she placed a piece of ice on the reindeer's head, and read what was written on the dried fish. After she had read it three times, she knew it by heart, so she popped the fish

into the soup saucepan, as she knew it was good to eat, and she never wasted anything. The reindeer told his own story first, and then little Gerda's, and the Finlander twinkled with her clever eyes, but she said nothing. "You are so clever," said the reindeer; "I know you can tie all the winds of the world with a piece of twine. If a sailor unties one knot, he has a fair wind; when he unties the second, it blows hard; but if the third and fourth are loosened, then comes a storm, which will root up whole forests. Cannot you give this little maiden something which will make her as strong as twelve men, to overcome the Snow Queen?"

"The power of twelve men!" said the Finland woman; "that would be of very little use." But she went to a shelf and took down and unrolled a large skin, on which were inscribed wonderful characters, and she read till the perspiration ran down from her forehead. But the reindeer begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked at the Finland woman with such beseeching tearful eyes, that her own eyes began to twinkle again; so she drew the reindeer into a corner, and whispered to him while she laid a fresh piece of ice on his head, "Little Kay is really with the Snow Queen, and he finds everything there so much to his taste and his liking, that he believes it is the finest place in the world; but this is because he has a piece of broken glass in his heart, and a little piece of glass in his eye. These must be taken out, or he will never be a human being again, and the Snow Queen will retain her power over him."

"But can you not give little Gerda something to help her to conquer this power?"

"I can give her no greater power than she has already," said the woman; "don't you see how strong that is, how men and animals are obliged to serve her, and how well she has got through the world, barefooted as she is? She cannot receive any power from me greater than she now has, which consists in her own purity and innocence of heart. If she cannot herself obtain access to the Snow Queen, and remove the glass fragments from little Kay, we can do nothing to help her. Two miles from here the Snow Queen's garden begins; you can carry the little girl so far, and set

her down by the large bush which stands in the snow, covered with red berries. Do not stay gossiping, but come back here as quickly as you can." Then the Finland woman lifted little Gerda upon the reindeer, and he ran away with her as fast as he could.

"Oh, I have forgotten my boots and my mittens," cried little Gerda, as soon as she felt the cutting cold, but the reindeer dared not stop, so he ran on till he reached the bush with the red berries; here he set Gerda down, and he kissed her, and the great bright tears trickled over the animal's cheeks; then he left her and ran back as fast as he could.

There stood poor Gerda, without shoes, without gloves, in the midst of cold, dreary, ice-bound Finland. She ran forwards as quickly as she could, when a whole regiment of snow-flakes came round her; they did not, however, fall from the sky, which was quite clear and glittering with the northern lights. The snow-flakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came to her, the larger they appeared. Gerda remembered how large and beautiful they looked through the burning-glass. But these were really larger, and much more terrible, for they were alive, and were the guards of the Snow Queen, and had the strangest shapes. Some were like great porcupines, others like twisted serpents with their heads stretching out, and some few were like little fat bears with their hair bristled; but all were dazzlingly white, and all were living snow-flakes. Then little Gerda repeated the Lord's Prayer, and the cold was so great that she could see her own breath come out of her mouth like steam as she uttered the words. The steam appeared to increase, as she continued her prayer, till it took the shape of little angels, who grew larger the moment they touched the earth. They all wore helmets on their heads, and carried spears and shields. Their number continued to increase more and more; and by the time Gerda had finished her prayers, a whole legion stood round her. They thrust their spears into the terrible snow-flakes, so that they shivered into a hundred pieces, and little Gerda could go forward with courage and safety. The angels stroked her hands and feet, so that she felt the cold less, and she hastened on to the Snow Queen's castle.

But now we must see what Kay is doing. In truth he thought not of little Gerda, and never supposed she could be standing in the front of the palace.

SEVENTH STORY.

Of the Palace of the Snow Queen, and what happened there at last.

The walls of the palace were formed of drifted snow, and the windows and doors of the cutting winds. There were more than a hundred rooms in it, all as if they had been formed with snow blown together. The largest of them extended for several miles; they were all lighted up by the vivid light of the aurora, and they were so large and empty, so icy cold and glittering! There were no amusements here, not even a little bear's ball, when the storm might have been the music, and the bears could have danced on their hind legs, and shown their good manners. There were no pleasant games of snap-dragon, or touch, or even a gossip over the tea-table, for the young-lady foxes. Empty, vast, and cold were the halls of the Snow Queen. The flickering flame of the northern lights could be plainly seen, whether they rose high or low in the heavens, from every part of the castle. In the midst of this empty, endless hall of snow was a frozen lake, broken on its surface into a thousand forms; each piece resembled another, from being in itself perfect as a work of art, and in the centre of this lake sat the Snow Queen, when she was at home. She called the lake "The Mirror of Reason," and said that it was the best, and indeed the only one in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue with cold, indeed almost black, but he did not feel it; for the Snow Queen had kissed away the icy shiverings, and his heart was already a lump of ice. He dragged some sharp, flat pieces of ice to and fro, and placed them together in all kinds of positions, as if he wished to make something out of them; just as we try to form various figures with little tablets of wood which we call "a Chinese puzzle." Kay's figures were very artistic; it was the icy game of reason at which he played, and in

his eyes the figures were very remarkable, and of the highest importance; this opinion was owing to the piece of glass still sticking in his eye. He composed many complete figures, forming different words, but there was one word he never could manage to form, although he wished it very much. It was the word "Eternity." The Snow Queen had said to him, "When you can find out this, you shall be your own master, and I will give you the whole world and a new pair of skates." But he could not accomplish it.

"Now I must hasten away to warmer countries," said the Snow Queen. "I will go and look into the black craters of the tops of the burning mountains, Etna and Vesuvius, as they are called—I shall make them look white, which will be good for them, and for the lemons and the grapes." And away flew the Snow Queen, leaving little Kay quite alone in the great hall which was so many miles in length; so he sat and looked at his pieces of ice, and was thinking so deeply, and sat so still, that any one might have supposed he was frozen.

Just at this moment it happened that little Gerda came through the great door of the castle. Cutting winds were raging around her, but she offered up a prayer and the winds sank down as if they were going to sleep; and she went on till she came to the large empty hall, and caught sight of Kay; she knew him directly; she flew to him and threw her arms round his neck, and held him fast, while she exclaimed, "Kay, dear little Kay, I have found you at last."

But he sat quite still, stiff and cold.

Then little Gerda wept hot tears, which fell on his breast, and penetrated into his heart, and thawed the lump of ice, and washed away the little piece of glass which had stuck there. Then he looked at her, and she sang—

> "Roses bloom and cease to be,
> But we shall the Christ-child see."

Then Kay burst into tears, and he wept so that the splinter of glass swam out of his eye. Then he recognised Gerda, and said, joyfully, "Gerda, dear little Gerda, where have you been all this

time, and where have I been?" And he looked all around him, and said, "How cold it is, and how large and empty it all looks," and he clung to Gerda, and she laughed and wept for joy. It was so pleasing to see them that the pieces of ice even danced about; and when they were tired and went to lie down, they formed themselves into the letters of the word which the Snow Queen had said he must find out before he could be his own master, and have the whole world and a pair of new skates. Then Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they became blooming; and she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and his feet, and then he became quite healthy and cheerful. The Snow Queen might come home now when she pleased, for there stood his certainty of freedom, in the word she wanted, written in shining letters of ice.

Then they took each other by the hand, and went forth from the great palace of ice. They spoke of the grandmother, and of the roses on the roof, and as they went on the winds were at rest, and the sun burst forth. When they arrived at the bush with red berries, there stood the reindeer waiting for them, and he had brought another young reindeer with him, whose udders were full, and the children drank her warm milk and kissed her on the mouth. Then they carried Kay and Gerda first to the Finland woman, where they warmed themselves thoroughly in the hot room, and she gave them directions about their journey home. Next they went to the Lapland woman, who had made some new clothes for them, and put their sledges in order. Both the reindeer ran by their side, and followed them as far as the boundaries of the country, where the first green leaves were budding. And here they took leave of the two reindeer and the Lapland woman, and all said—Farewell. Then the birds began to twitter, and the forest too was full of green young leaves; and out of it came a beautiful horse, which Gerda remembered, for it was one which had drawn the golden coach. A young girl was riding upon it, with a shining red cap on her head, and pistols in her belt. It was the little robber-maiden, who had got tired of staying at home; she was going first to the north, and if that did not suit

her, she meant to try some other part of the world. She knew Gerda directly, and Gerda remembered her: it was a joyful meeting.

"You are a fine fellow to go gadding about in this way," said she to little Kay, "I should like to know whether you deserve that any one should go to the end of the world to find you."

But Gerda patted her cheeks, and asked after the prince and princess.

"They are gone to foreign countries," said the robber-girl.

"And the crow?" asked Gerda.

"Oh, the crow is dead," she replied; "his tame sweetheart is now a widow, and wears a bit of black worsted round her leg. She mourns very pitifully, but it is all stuff. But now tell me how you managed to get him back."

Then Gerda and Kay told her all about it.

"Snip, snap, snare! it's all right at last," said the robber-girl.

Then she took both their hands, and promised that if ever she should pass through the town, she would call and pay them a visit. And then she rode away into the wide world. But Gerda and Kay went hand-in-hand towards home; and as they advanced, spring appeared more lovely with its green verdure and its beautiful flowers. Very soon they recognised the large town where they lived, and the tall steeples of the churches, in which the sweet bells were ringing a merry peal as they entered it, and found their way to their grandmother's door. They went upstairs into the little room, where all looked just as it used to do. The old clock was going "tick, tick," and the hands pointed to the time of day, but as they passed through the door into the room, they perceived that they were both grown up, and become a man and woman. The roses out on the roof were in full bloom, and peeped in at the window; and there stood the little chairs, on which they had sat when children; and Kay and Gerda seated themselves each on their own chair, and held each other by the hand, while the cold empty grandeur of the Snow Queen's palace vanished from their memories like a painful dream. The grandmother sat in God's bright sunshine, and she read aloud from the Bible, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the

kingdom of God." And Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes, and all at once understood the words of the old song——

"Roses bloom and cease to be,
But we shall the Christ-child see."

And they both sat there, grown up, yet children at heart; and it was summer—warm, beautiful summer.

The Roses and the Sparrows.

It really appeared as if something very important was going on by the duck pond; but this was not the case. A few minutes before, all the ducks had been resting on the water, or standing on their heads, for they can do so, and then they all swam in a bustle to the shore; the traces of their feet could be seen on the wet earth, and far and wide could be heard their quacking. The water, so lately clear and bright as a mirror, became quite in a commotion. A moment before, every tree and bush near the old farmhouse, and the house itself, with the holes in the roof, and the swallows' nests, and, above all, the beautiful rose-bush covered with roses, had been clearly reflected in the water. The rose-bush on the wall hung over the water, which resembled a picture, only everything appeared upside down; but when the water was set in motion, it all vanished and the picture disappeared. Two feathers dropped by the fluttering ducks floated to and fro on the water; all at once they took a start, as if the wind were coming; but it did not come, so they were obliged to lie still, as the water became again quiet and at rest. The roses could once more behold their own reflections; they were very beautiful, but they knew it not, for no one had told them. The sun shone between the delicate leaves, everywhere the sweet fragrance spread itself, creating sensations of deep happiness.

"How beautiful is our existence!" said one of the roses. "I feel as if I should like to kiss the sun, it is so bright and warm. I should like to kiss the roses, too, our images in the water, and the pretty birds there in their nests. There are some birds, too, in a

nest above us, they stretch out their heads and cry "Tweet, tweet" very faintly; they have no feathers yet, as their father and mother have; they are good neighbours both above us and below us. How beautiful is our life!" The young birds above and the young ones below were the same, they were sparrows, and their nest was reflected in the water. Their parents were sparrows also, and they had taken possession of an empty swallow's nest of the year before, and occupied it now as if it were their own.

"Are those ducks' children that are swimming about?" asked the young sparrows, as they spied the feathers on the water.

"If you must ask questions, pray ask sensible ones," said the mother. "Can you not see that these are feathers, the living stuff for clothes, which I wear and which you will wear soon? but ours is much finer. I should like, however, to have them up here in the nest, they would make it so warm. I am rather curious to know why the ducks were so alarmed just now; it could not be from fear of us, certainly, though I did say 'tweet' rather loudly. The thick-headed roses really ought to know, but they are very ignorant, they only look at one another and smell. I am heartily tired of such neighbours."

"Listen to the sweet little birds above us," said the roses; "they are trying to sing, they cannot manage it yet, but it will be done in time; what a pleasure it will be, and how nice to have such lively neighbours."

Suddenly two horses came prancing along to drink at the water; a peasant boy rode on one of them; he had a broad-brimmed black hat on, but had taken off most of his other clothes that he might ride into the deepest part of the pond; he whistled like a bird, and while passing the rose-bush he plucked a rose and placed it in his hat, and then rode on, thinking himself very fine. The other roses looked at their sister, and asked each other where she could be going, but they did not know.

"I should like for once to go out into the world," said one, "although it is very lovely here in our home of green leaves. The sun shines warmly by day, and in the night we can see that heaven is more beautiful still, as it sparkles through the holes in the sky."

She meant the stars, for she knew no better.

"We make the house very lively," said the mother sparrow, "and people say that a swallow's nest brings luck, therefore they are pleased to see us; but as to our neighbours, a rose-bush on the wall produces damp. It will most likely be removed, and perhaps corn will grow here instead of it. Roses are good for nothing but to be looked at, and smelt, or perhaps one may chance to be stuck in a hat. I have heard from my mother that they fall off every year. The farmer's wife preserves them by laying them in salt, and then they receive a French name, which I neither can nor will pronounce; then they are sprinkled on the fire to produce a pleasant smell. Such, you see, is their life. They are only formed to please the eye and the nose. Now you know all about them."

As evening approached, the gnats played about in the warm air beneath the rosy clouds, and the nightingale came and sang to the roses, that *the beautiful* was like sunshine to the world, and that *the beautiful* lives for ever. The roses thought that the nightingale was singing of herself, which any one, indeed, could easily suppose; they never imagined that her song could refer to them. But it was a joy to them, and they wondered to themselves whether all the little sparrows in the nest would become nightingales.

"We understood that bird's song very well," said the young sparrows, "but one word was not clear. What is *the beautiful?*"

"Oh, nothing of any consequence," replied the mother sparrow. "It is something relating to appearances o'er yonder at the nobleman's house. The pigeons have a house of their own, and every day they have corn and peas spread for them. I have dined there with them sometimes, and so shall you by-and-by, for I believe the old maxim—'Tell me what company you keep, and I will tell you what you are.' Well, over at the noble house there are two birds with green throats and crests on their heads. They can spread out their tails like large wheels, and they reflect so many beautiful colours that it dazzles the eyes to look at them. These birds are called peacocks, and they belong to *the beautiful*, but

if only a few of their feathers were plucked off they would not appear better than we do. I would myself have plucked some out had they not been so large."

"I will pluck them," squeaked the youngest sparrow, who had as yet no feathers of his own.

In the cottage dwelt two young married people, who loved each other very much, and were industrious and active, so that everything looked neat and pretty around them. On Sunday mornings early the young wife came out, gathered a handful of the most beautiful roses, and put them in a glass of water, which she placed on a side table.

"I see now that it is Sunday," said the husband as he kissed his little wife. Then they sat down and read their hymn-books, holding each other's hands, while the sun shone down upon the young couple, and upon the fresh roses in the glass.

"This sight is really too wearisome," said the mother sparrow, who from her nest could look into the room, and she flew away.

The same thing occurred the next Sunday, and indeed every Sunday, fresh roses were gathered and placed in a glass, but the rose-tree continued to bloom in all its beauty. After a while the young sparrows were fledged, and wanted to fly, but the mother would not allow it, and so they were obliged to remain in the nest for the present, while she flew away alone. It so happened that some boys had fastened a snare, made of horsehair, to the branch of a tree, and before she was aware, her leg became entangled in the horsehair so tightly as almost to cut it through. What pain and terror she felt! The boys ran up quickly and seized her, not in a very gentle manner.

"It is only a sparrow," they said. However, they did not let her fly, but took her home with them, and every time she squeaked they knocked her on the beak.

In the farmyard they met an old man, who knew how to make soap for shaving and washing, in cakes or in balls. When he saw the sparrow which the boys had brought home, and which they said they did not know what to do with, he said "Shall we make it beautiful?"

A cold shudder passed over the sparrow when she heard this. The old man then took a shell containing a quantity of glittering gold leaf, from a box, full of beautiful colours, and told the youngsters to fetch the white of an egg, with which he besmeared the sparrow all over, and then laid the gold leaf upon it; so that the mother sparrow was now gilded from head to tail. But she thought not of her appearance, but trembled in every limb. Then the soap-maker tore a little piece out of the red lining of his jacket, cut notches in it, so that it looked like a cock's comb, and stuck it on the bird's head. "Now you will see gold-jacket fly," said the old man, and he released the sparrow, which flew away in deadly terror, with the sunlight shining upon her. How she did glitter; all the sparrows, and even a crow, who is a knowing old boy, were scared at the sight; yet still they followed it to discover what foreign bird it could be. Driven by anguish and terror she flew homewards, almost ready to sink to the earth for want of strength. The flock of birds that were following increased, and some even tried to peck her.

"Look at him! Look at him!" they all cried. "Look at him! Look at him!" cried the young ones as their mother approached the nest, but they did not know her. "That must be a young peacock, for he glitters in all colours, it quite hurts one's eyes to look at him, as mother told us; 'tweet,' this is *the beautiful*." And then they pecked the bird with their little beaks, so that she was quite unable to get into the nest, and was too much exhausted even to say "tweet," much less to say "I am your mother." So the other birds fell upon the sparrow and pulled out feather after feather, till she sunk bleeding into the rose-bush.

"You poor creature," said the roses, "be at rest, we will hide you, lean your little head against us."

The sparrow spread out her wings once more, and drew them in close to her, and lay dead amongst the roses, her fresh and lovely neighbours.

"Tweet," sounded from the nest, "where can our mother be staying? it is quite unaccountable. Can this be a trick of hers to show us that we are now to take care of ourselves? She has left

us the house as an inheritance, but as it cannot belong to us all when we have families, who is to have it?"

"It won't do for you all to stay with me when I increase my household with a wife and children," remarked the youngest.

"I shall have more wives and children than you," said the second.

"But I am the eldest," cried a third.

Then they all became angry, beat each other with their wings, pecked with their beaks, till one after another bounded out of the nest. There they lay in a rage, holding their heads on one side and twinkling the eye that looked upwards. This was their way of looking sulky. They could all fly a little, and by practice they soon learnt to do so much better. At length they agreed upon a sign by which they might be able to recognise each other, in case they should meet in the world after they had separated. This sign was to be the cry of "tweet, tweet," and a scratching on the ground three times with the left foot. The youngster, who was left behind in the nest, spread himself out as broad as ever he could, he was the householder now. But his glory did not last long; for during that night red flames of fire burst through the windows of the cottage, they seized the thatched roof and blazed up frightfully; the whole house was burned down and the sparrow perished with it, while the young couple fortunately escaped with their lives. When the sun rose again, and all nature looked refreshed as after a quiet sleep, nothing remained of the cottage but a few blackened charred beams, leaning against the chimney that now was the only master of the place. Thick smoke still rose from the ruins, but outside on the wall the rose-bush still remained unhurt, blooming and fresh as ever, while each flower and each spray was mirrored in the clear water beneath.

"How beautifully the roses are blooming on the walls of that ruined cottage," said a passer-by. "A more lovely picture could scarcely be imagined. I must have it."

And the speaker took out of his pocket a little book, full of white leaves of paper, for he was an artist, and with a pencil he took a sketch of the smoking ruins, the blackened rafters, and the chimney that overhung them, and which seemed more and more

to totter; and quite in the foreground stood the large, blooming rose-bush, which added beauty to the picture; and indeed, for the sake of the roses the sketch had been made. Later in the day two of the sparrows who had been born there came by.

"Where is the house?" they asked. "Where is the nest? 'tweet tweet;' all is burnt down, and our strong brother with it. That is all he has got by keeping the nest. The roses have escaped famously; they look as well as ever, with their rosy cheeks: they do not trouble themselves about their neighbour's misfortunes. I won't speak to them: and really, in my opinion, the place looks very ugly;" so he flew away.

On a fine, bright sunny day in autumn, so bright that any one might have supposed it was still the middle of summer, a number of pigeons were hopping about in the nicely-kept courtyard of the nobleman's house, in front of the great steps. Some were black, others white, and some of various colours, and their plumage glittered in the sunshine. An old mother pigeon said to her young ones, "Place yourselves in groups! place yourselves in groups! it has a much better appearance."

"What are those little grey creatures which are running about behind us?" asked an old pigeon, with red and green round her eyes. "Little grey ones, little grey ones," she cried.

"They are sparrows; good little creatures enough. We have always had the character of being very good-natured, so we allow them to pick up some corn with us; and they do not interrupt our conversation, and they draw back their left foot so prettily."

Sure enough so they did, three times each, and with the left foot too, and said "tweet," by which we recognise them as the sparrows that were brought up in the nest on the house that was burnt down.

"The food here is very good," said the sparrows; while the pigeons strutted round each other, puffed out their throats, and formed their own opinions on what they observed.

"Do you see the pouter pigeon?" said one of another. "Do you see how he swallows the peas? He takes too much, and always chooses the best of everything. Coo-oo, coo-oo. How

the ugly, spiteful creature erects his crest." And all their eyes sparkled with malice. "Place yourselves in groups, place yourselves in groups. Little grey coats; little grey coats. Coo-oo, coo-oo."

So they went on, and it will be the same a thousand years hence. The sparrows feasted bravely, and listened attentively; they even stood in ranks like the pigeons, but it did not suit them. So having satisfied their hunger, they left the pigeons passing their own opinions upon them to each other, and then slipped through the garden railings. The door of a room in the house leading into the garden stood open, and one of them feeling brave after his good dinner, hopped upon the threshold, crying, "Tweet; I can venture so far."

"Tweet," said another; "I can venture that and a great deal more," and into the room he hopped.

The first followed, and seeing no one there, the third became courageous, and flew right across the room, saying, "Venture everything, or do not venture at all. This is a wonderful place, a man's nest I suppose, and, look!—what can this be?"

Just in front of the sparrows stood the ruins of the burnt cottage; roses were blooming over it, and their reflection appeared in the water beneath, and the black charred beams rested against the tottering chimney. How could it be? How came the cottage and the roses in a room in the nobleman's house? And then the sparrows tried to fly over the roses and the chimney, but they only struck themselves against a flat wall. It was a picture—a large beautiful picture, which the artist had painted from the little sketch he had taken.

"Tweet," said the sparrows; "it is really nothing after all; it only looks like reality. Tweet, I suppose that is *the beautiful*. Can you understand it? I cannot."

Then some persons entered the room, and the sparrows flew away. Years and days passed; the pigeons had often "coo-oo-d," we must not say quarrelled, though perhaps they did, naughty things. The sparrows had suffered from cold in the winter, and lived gloriously in summer. They were all betrothed, or married,

or whatever you like to call it. They had little ones, and of course each considered his own brood the wisest and the prettiest. One flew in this direction, and another in that, and when they met, they recognised each other by saying "tweet," and three times drawing back the left foot. The eldest remained single, she had no nest, nor young ones; her great wish was to see a large town, so she flew to Copenhagen. Near to the castle that stood by the channel could be seen a large house, which was richly decorated with various colours. Down the channel sailed many ships, laden with apples and earthenware. The windows were broader below than at the top, and when the sparrows peeped through, they saw a room that looked to them like a tulip, with beautiful colours of every shade. Within the tulip were white figures of human beings, made of marble, some few of plaster, but this is the same thing to a sparrow. Upon the roof stood a metal chariot and horses; and the goddess of victory, also of metal, was seated in the chariot driving the horses. It was Thorwaldsen's Museum. "How it shines and glitters!" said the maiden sparrow; "this must be *the beautiful*—tweet—only this is larger than a peacock." She remembered what her mother had told them in her childhood, that the peacock was one of the greatest examples of *the beautiful*. She flew down into the courtyard, where everything also was very grand. The walls were painted to represent palm branches, and in the midst of the court stood a large, blooming rose-tree, spreading its young, sweet, rose-covered branches over a grave. Thither the maiden sparrow flew, for she saw many others of her own kind.

"Tweet," said she, drawing back her foot three times. She had, during the years that had passed, often made the usual greeting to the sparrows she met, but without receiving any acknowledgment, for friends who are once separated do not meet every day. This manner of greeting was become a habit to her, and to-day two old sparrows and a young one returned the greeting.

"Tweet," they replied, and drew back the left foot three times. They were two old sparrows out of the nest, and a young one

belonging to the family. "Ah, good-day; how do you do? To think of our meeting here! This is a very grand place, but there is not much to eat; this is *the beautiful*. Tweet."

A great many people now came out of the side rooms, in which the marble statues stood, and approached the grave where slept the remains of the great master who had carved these marble statues. Each face had a reflected glory as they stood round Thorwaldsen's grave, and some few gathered up the fallen rose-leaves to preserve them. They had all come from afar. One from mighty England, others from Germany and France. One very handsome lady plucked a rose, and concealed it in her bosom. Then the sparrows thought that the roses ruled in this place, and that the whole house had been built for them, which seemed really too much honour; but as all the people showed their love for the roses, the sparrows thought they would not remain behindhand in paying their respects. "Tweet," they said, and swept the ground with their tails, and glanced with one eye at the roses. They had not looked at them very long, however, before they felt convinced that they were old acquaintances, and so they actually were. The artist who had sketched the rose-bush and the ruins of the cottage had since then received permission to transplant it, and had given it to the architect, for more beautiful roses had never been seen. The architect had planted it on the grave of Thorwaldsen, where it continued to bloom, the image of *the beautiful*, scattering its fragrant rosy leaves to be gathered and carried away into distant lands in memory of the spot on which they fell.

"Have you obtained a situation in town?" then asked the sparrows of the roses.

The roses nodded; they recognised their little brown neighbours, and were rejoiced to see them again.

"It is very delightful," said the roses, "to live here and to blossom, to meet old friends, and to see cheerful faces every day. It is as if each day were a holiday."

"Tweet," said the sparrows to each other. "Yes, these really are our old neighbours. We remember their origin near the pond.

Tweet; how they have risen, to be sure. Some people seem to get on while they are asleep. Ah! there's a withered leaf, I can see it quite plainly."

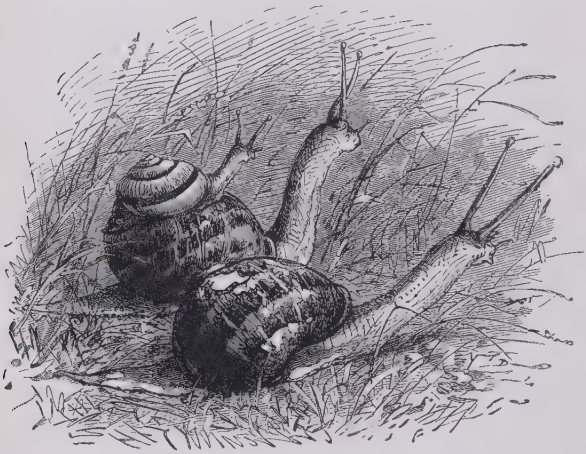
And they pecked at the leaf till it fell. But the rose-bush continued fresher and greener than ever. The roses bloomed in the sunshine on Thorwaldsen's grave, and thus became linked with his immortal name.

The Happy Family.

THE largest green leaf in this country is certainly the burdock-leaf. If you hold it in front of you, it is large enough for an apron; and if you hold it over your head, it is almost as good as an umbrella, it is so wonderfully large. A burdock never grows alone; where it grows, there are many more, and it is a splendid sight; and all this splendour is good for snails. The great white snails, which grand people in olden times used to have made into fricassees; and when they had eaten them, they would say, "Oh, what a delicious dish!" for these people really thought them good; and these snails lived on burdock-leaves, and for them the burdock was planted.

There was once an old estate where no one now lived to require snails; indeed, the owners had all died out, but the burdock still flourished; it grew over all the beds and walks of the garden—its growth had no check—till it became at last quite a forest of burdocks. Here and there stood an apple or a plum tree; but for this, nobody would have thought the place had ever been a garden. It was burdock from one end to the other; and here lived the last two surviving snails. They knew not themselves how old they were; but they could remember the time when there were a great many more of them, and that they were descended from a family which came from foreign lands, and that the whole forest had been planted for them and theirs. They had never been away from the garden; but they knew that another place once existed in the world, called the Duke's Palace Castle, in

which some of their relations had been boiled till they became black, and were then laid on a silver dish ; but what was done afterwards they did not know. Besides, they could not imagine exactly how it felt to be boiled and placed on a silver dish ; but no doubt it was something very fine and highly genteel. Neither the cockchafer, nor the toad, nor the earth-worm, whom they questioned about it, would give them the least information ; for none of their relations had ever been cooked or served on a silver dish. The old white snails were the most aristocratic race in the



world—they knew that. The forest had been planted for them, and the nobleman's castle had been built entirely that they might be cooked and laid on silver dishes.

They lived quite retired and very happily ; and as they had no children of their own, they had adopted a little common snail, which they brought up as their own child. The little one would not grow, for he was only a common snail ; but the old people, particularly the mother-snail, declared that she could easily see how he grew ; and when the father said he could not perceive it, she begged him to feel the little snail's shell, and he did so, and found that the mother was right.

One day it rained very fast. "Listen, what a drumming there is on the burdock-leaves; tum, tum, tum; tum, tum, tum," said the father-snail.

"There come the drops," said the mother; "they are trickling down the stalks. We shall have it very wet here presently. I am very glad we have such good houses, and that the little one has one of his own. There has been really more done for us than for any other creature; it is quite plain that we are the most noble people in the world. We have houses from our birth, and the burdock forest has been planted for us. I should very much like to know how far it extends, and what lies beyond it."

"There can be nothing better than we have here," said the father-snail; "I wish for nothing more."

"Yes, but I do," said the mother; "I should like to be taken to the palace, and boiled, and laid upon a silver dish, as was done to all our ancestors; and you may be sure it must be something very uncommon."

"The nobleman's castle, perhaps, has fallen to decay," said the snail-father, "or the burdock wood may have grown over it, so that those who live there cannot get out. You need not be in a hurry; you are always so impatient, and the youngster is getting just the same. He has been three days creeping to the top of that stalk. I feel quite giddy when I look at him."

"You must not scold him," said the mother-snail; "he creeps so very carefully. He will be the joy of our home; and we old folks have nothing else to live for. But have you ever thought where we are to get a wife for him? Do you think that farther out in the wood there may be others of our race?"

"There may be black snails, no doubt," said the old snail; "black snails without houses; but they are so vulgar and conceited too. But we can give the ants a commission; they run here and there, as if they all had much business to get through. They, most likely, will know of a wife for our youngster."

"I certainly know a most beautiful bride," said one of the ants; "but I fear it would not do, for she is a queen."

"That does not matter," said the old snail; "has she a house?"

"She has a palace," replied the ant—"a most beautiful ant-palace with seven hundred passages."

"Thank you," said the mother-snail; "but our boy shall not go to live in an ant-hill. If you know of nothing better, we will give the commission to the white gnats; they fly about in rain and sunshine; they know the burdock wood from one end to the other."

"We have a wife for him," said the gnats; "a hundred man-steps from here there is a little snail with a house, sitting on a gooseberry-bush; she is quite alone, and old enough to be married. It is only a hundred man-steps from here."

"Then let her come to him," said the old people. "He has the whole burdock forest; she has only a bush."

So they brought the little lady-snail. She took eight days to perform the journey; but that was just as it ought to be; for it showed her to be one of the right breeding. And then they had a wedding. Six glow-worms gave as much light as they could; but in other respects it was all very quiet; for the old snails could not bear festivities or a crowd. But a beautiful speech was made by the mother-snail. The father could not speak; he was too much overcome. Then they gave the whole burdock forest to the young snails as an inheritance, and repeated what they had so often said, that it was the finest place in the world, and that if they led upright and honourable lives, and their family increased, they and their children might some day be taken to the nobleman's palace, to be boiled black, and laid on a silver dish. And when they had finished speaking, the old couple crept into their houses, and came out no more; for they slept.

The young snail pair now ruled in the forest, and had a numerous progeny. But as the young ones were never boiled or laid in silver dishes, they concluded that the castle had fallen into decay, and that all the people in the world were dead; and as nobody contradicted them, they thought they must be right. And the rain fell upon the burdock-leaves, to play the drum for them, and the sun shone to paint colours on the burdock forest for them, and they were very happy; the whole family were entirely and perfectly happy.



The Angel.

"WHENEVER a good child dies, an angel of God comes down from heaven, takes the dead child in his arms, spreads out his great white wings, and flies with him over all the places which the child has loved during his life. Then he gathers a large handful of flowers, which he carries up to the Almighty, that they may bloom more brightly in heaven than they do on earth. And the Almighty presses the flowers to His heart, but He kisses the flower that pleases Him best, and it receives a voice, and is able to join the song of the chorus of bliss."

These words were spoken by an angel of God, as he carried a dead child up to heaven, and the child listened as if in a dream. Then they passed over well-known spots, where the little one had often played, and through beautiful gardens full of lovely flowers.

"Which of these shall we take with us to heaven to be transplanted there?" asked the angel.

Close by grew a slender, beautiful rose-bush, but some wicked hand had broken the stem, and the half-opened rose-buds hung faded and withered on the trailing branches.

"Poor rose-bush!" said the child, "let us take it with us to heaven, that it may bloom above in God's garden."

The angel took up the rose-bush; then he kissed the child, and the little one half-opened his eyes. The angel gathered also some beautiful flowers, as well as a few humble buttercups and heart's-ease.

"Now we have flowers enough," said the child; but the angel only nodded, he did not fly upward to heaven.

It was night, and quite still in the great town. Here they remained, and the angel hovered over a small, narrow street, in which lay a large heap of straw, ashes, and sweepings from the houses of people who had removed. There lay fragments of plates, pieces of plaster, rags, old hats, and other rubbish not pleasant to see. Amidst all this confusion, the angel pointed to the pieces of a broken flower-pot, and to a lump of earth which had fallen out of it. The earth had been kept from falling to pieces by the roots of a withered field-flower, which had been thrown amongst the rubbish.

"We will take this with us," said the angel; "I will tell you why as we fly along."

And as they flew the angel related the history.

"Down in that narrow lane, in a low cellar, lived a poor sick boy; he had been afflicted from his childhood, and even in his best days he could just manage to walk up and down the room on crutches once or twice, but no more. During some days in summer the sunbeams would lie on the floor of the cellar for about half an hour. In this spot the poor sick boy would sit warming himself in the sunshine, and watching the red blood through his delicate fingers as he held them before his face. Then he would say he had been out, yet he knew nothing of the green forest in its spring verdure, till a neighbour's son brought him a green bough from a beech-tree. This he would place over his head, and fancy that he was in the beech-wood while the sun shone, and the birds carolled gaily. One spring day the neighbour's boy brought him some field-flowers, and among them was one to which the root still adhered. This he carefully planted in a flower-pot, and placed in a window-seat near his bed. And the flower had been planted by a fortunate hand, for it grew,

put forth fresh shoots, and blossomed every year. It became a splendid flower-garden to the sick boy, and his little treasure upon earth. He watered it, and cherished it, and took care it should have the benefit of every sunbeam that found its way into the cellar, from the earliest morning ray to the evening sunset. The flower entwined itself even in his dreams—for him it bloomed, for him spread its perfume. And it gladdened his eyes, and to the flower he turned, even in death, when the Lord called him. He has been one year with God. During that time the flower has stood in the window, withered and forgotten, till at length cast out among the sweepings into the street, on the day of the lodgers' removal. And this poor flower, withered and faded as it is, we have added to our nosegay, because it gave more real joy than the most beautiful flower in the garden of a queen."

"But how do you know all this?" asked the child whom the angel was carrying to heaven.

"I know it," said the angel, "because I myself was the poor sick boy who walked upon crutches, and I know my own flower well."

Then the child opened his eyes and looked into the glorious happy face of the angel, and at the same moment they found themselves in that heavenly home where all is happiness and joy. And God pressed the dead child to His heart, and wings were given him so that he could fly with the angel, hand in hand. Then the Almighty pressed all the flowers to His heart; but He kissed the withered field-flower, and it received a voice. Then it joined in the song of the angels, who surrounded the throne, some near, and others in a distant circle, but all equally happy. They all joined in the chorus of praise, both great and small—the good, happy child, and the poor field-flower, that once lay withered and cast away on a heap of rubbish in a narrow, dark street.

The Story of the Year.

It was near the end of January, and a terrible fall of snow was pelting down, and whirling through the streets and lanes; the windows were plastered with snow on the outside, snow fell in masses from the roofs. Every one seemed in a great hurry; they ran, they flew, fell into each other's arms, holding fast for a moment as long as they could stand safely. Coaches and horses looked as if they had been frosted with sugar. The footmen stood with their backs against the carriages, so as to turn their faces from the wind. The foot-passengers kept within the shelter of the carriages, which could only move slowly on in the deep snow. At last the storm abated, and a narrow path was swept clean in front of the houses; when two persons met in this path they stood still, for neither liked to take the first step on one side into the deep snow to let the other pass him. There they stood silent and motionless, till at last, as if by tacit consent, they each sacrificed a leg and buried it in the deep snow. Towards evening the weather became calm. The sky, cleared from the snow, looked more lofty and transparent, while the stars shone with new brightness and purity. The frozen snow crackled under foot, and was quite firm enough to bear the sparrows, who hopped upon it in the morning dawn. They searched for food in the path which had been swept, but there was very little for them, and they were terribly cold. "Tweet, tweet," said one to another; "they call this a new year, but I think it is worse than the last. We might just as well have kept the old year; I'm quite unhappy, and I have a right to be so."

"Yes, you have; and yet the people ran about and fired off guns to usher in the new year," said a little shivering sparrow. "They threw things against the doors, and were quite beside themselves with joy, because the old year had disappeared. I was glad too, for I expected we should have some warm days, but my hopes have come to nothing. It freezes harder than ever; I think mankind have made a mistake in reckoning time."

"That they have," said a third, an old sparrow with a white

poll ; "they have something they call a calendar ; it's an invention of their own, and everything must be arranged according to it, but it won't do. When spring comes, then the year begins. It is the voice of nature, and I reckon by that."

"But when will spring come ? " asked the others.

"It will come when the stork returns, but he is very uncertain, and here in the town no one knows anything about it. In the country they have more knowledge ; shall we fly away there and wait ? we shall be nearer to spring then, certainly."

"That may be all very well," said another sparrow, who had been hopping about for a long time, chirping, but not saying anything of consequence, "but I have found a few comforts here in town which, I'm afraid, I should miss out in the country. Here in this neighbourhood there lives a family of people who have been so sensible as to place three or four flower-pots against the wall in the courtyard, so that the openings are all turned inward, and the bottom of each points outward. In the latter a hole has been cut large enough for me to fly in and out. I and my husband have built a nest in one of these pots, and all our young ones, who have now flown away, were brought up there. The people who live there of course made the whole arrangement that they might have the pleasure of seeing us, or they would not have done it. It pleased them also to strew bread-crumbs for us, and so we have food, and may consider ourselves provided for. So I think my husband and I will stay where we are ; although we are not very happy, but we shall stay."

"And we will fly into the country," said the others, "to see if spring is coming." And away they flew.

In the country it was really winter, a few degrees colder than in the town. The sharp winds blew over the snow-covered fields. The farmer, wrapped in warm clothing, sat in his sledge, and beat his arms across his chest to keep off the cold. The whip lay on his lap. The horses ran till they smoked. The snow crackled, the sparrows hopped about in the wheel-ruts, and shivered, crying, "Tweet, tweet ; when will spring come ? It is very long in coming."

"Very long indeed," sounded over the field, from the nearest snow-covered hill. It might have been the echo which people heard, or perhaps the words of that wonderful old man, who sat high on a heap of snow, regardless of wind or weather. He was



"WHO IS THAT OLD MAN?" ASKED THE SPARROWS.

all in white; he had on a peasant's coarse white coat of frieze. He had long white hair, a pale face, and large clear blue eyes. "Who is that old man?" asked the sparrows.

"I know who he is," said an old raven, who sat on the fence,

and was condescending enough to acknowledge that we are all equal in the sight of Heaven, even little birds, and therefore he talked with the sparrows, and gave them the information they wanted. "I know who the old man is," he said. "It is Winter, the old man of last year; he is not dead yet, as the calendar says, but acts as guardian to little Prince Spring who is coming. Winter rules here still. Ugh! the cold makes you shiver, little ones, does it not?"

"There! Did I not tell you so?" said the smallest of the sparrows. "The calendar is only an invention of man, and is not arranged according to nature. They should leave these things to us; we are created so much more clever than they are."

One week passed, and then another. The forest looked dark, the hard-frozen lake lay like a sheet of lead. The mountains had disappeared, for over the land hung damp, icy mists. Large black crows flew about in silence; it was as if nature slept. At length a sunbeam glided over the lake, and it shone like burnished silver. But the snow on the fields and the hills did not glitter as before. The white form of Winter sat there still, with his unwandering gaze fixed on the south. He did not perceive that the snowy carpet seemed to sink, as it were, into the earth; that here and there a little green patch of grass appeared, and that these patches were covered with sparrows.

"Tee-wit, tee-wit; is spring coming at last?"

Spring! How the cry resounded over field and meadow, and through the dark-brown woods, where the fresh green moss still gleamed on the trunks of the trees; and from the south came the two first storks flying through the air, and on the back of each sat a lovely little child, a boy and a girl. They greeted the earth with a kiss, and wherever they placed their feet white flowers sprung up from beneath the snow. Hand in hand they approached the old ice-man, Winter, embraced him and clung to his breast; and as they did so, in a moment all three were enveloped in a thick, damp mist, dark and heavy, that closed over them like a veil. The wind arose with mighty rustling tone, and cleared away the mist. Then the sun shone out warmly. Winter had vanished

away, and the beautiful children of Spring sat on the throne of the year.

"This is really a new year," cried all the sparrows; "now we shall get our rights, and have some return for what we suffered in winter."

Wherever the two children wandered, green buds burst forth on bush and trees, the grass grew higher, and the corn-fields became lovely in delicate green.

The little maiden strewed flowers in her path. She held her apron before her: it was full of flowers; it was as if they sprung into life there, for the more she scattered around her, the more flowers did her apron contain. Eagerly she showered snowy blossoms over apple and peach trees, so that they stood in full beauty before even their green leaves had burst from the bud. Then the boy and the girl clapped their hands, and troops of birds came flying by, no one knew from whence, and they all twittered and chirped, singing, "Spring has come!" How beautiful everything was! Many an old dame came forth from her door into the sunshine, and shuffled about with great delight, glancing at the golden flowers which glittered everywhere in the fields, as they used to do in her young days. The world grew young again to her, as she said, "It is a blessed time out here to-day." The forest already wore its dress of dark-green buds. The thyme blossomed in fresh fragrance. Primroses and anemones sprung forth, and violets bloomed in the shade, while every blade of grass was full of strength and sap. Who could resist sitting down on such a beautiful carpet? And then the young children of Spring seated themselves, holding each other's hands, and sang, and laughed, and grew. A gentle rain fell upon them from the sky, but they did not notice it, for the rain-drops were their own tears of joy. They kissed each other, and were betrothed; and in the same moment the buds of the trees unfolded, and, when the sun rose, the forest was green. Hand in hand the two wandered beneath the fresh pendant canopy of foliage, while the sun's rays gleamed through the opening of the shade, in changing and varied colours. The delicate young leaves filled the air with refreshing

odour. Merrily rippled the clear brooks and rivulets between the green, velvety rushes, and over the many-coloured pebbles beneath. All nature spoke of abundance and plenty. The cuckoo sang, and the lark carolled, for it was now beautiful spring. The careful willows had, however, covered their blossoms with woolly gloves ; and this carefulness is rather tedious. Days and weeks went by, and the heat increased. Warm air waved the corn as it grew golden in the sun. The white northern lily spread its large green leaves over the glossy mirror of the woodland lake, and the fishes sought the shadows beneath them. In a sheltered part of the wood the sun shone upon the walls of a farmhouse, brightening the blooming roses, and ripening the black juicy berries, which hung on the loaded cherry-trees, with his hot beams. Here sat the lovely wife of Summer, the same whom we have seen as a child and a bride ; her eyes were fixed on dark gathering clouds, which in wavy outlines of black and indigo were piling themselves up like mountains, higher and higher. They came from every side, always increasing like a rising, rolling sea. Then they swooped towards the forest, where every sound had been silenced as if by magic, every breath hushed, every bird mute. All nature stood still in grave suspense. But in the lanes and the highways passengers on foot or in carriages were hurrying to find a place of shelter. Then came a flash of light, as if the sun had rushed forth from the sky, flaming, burning, all-devouring, and darkness returned amid a rolling crash of thunder. The rain poured down in streams—now there was darkness, then blinding light—now thrilling silence, then deafening din. The young brown reeds on the moor waved to and fro in feathery billows ; the forest boughs were hidden in a watery mist, and still light and darkness followed each other, still came the silence after the roar, while the corn and the blades of grass lay beaten down and swamped, so that it seemed almost impossible they could ever raise themselves again. But after a while the rain began to fall gently, the sun's rays pierced the clouds, and the water-drops glittered like pearls on leaf and stem. The birds sang, the fishes leaped up to the surface of the water, the gnats danced in the sunshine, and yonder, on a

rock by the heaving salt sea, sat Summer himself, a strong man with sturdy limbs and long, dripping hair. Strengthened by the cool bath, he sat in the warm sunshine, while all around him renewed nature bloomed strong, luxuriant, and beautiful: it was summer, warm, lovely summer. Sweet and pleasant was the fragrance wafted from the clover-fields, where the bees swarmed round the ruined tower, the bramble twined itself over the old altar, which, washed by the rain, glittered in the sunshine; and thither flew the queen bee with her swarm, and prepared wax and honey. But Summer and his bosom-wife saw it with different eyes; to them the altar-table was covered with the offering of nature. The evening sky shone like gold, no church dome could ever gleam so brightly, and between the golden evening and the blushing morning there was moonlight. It was indeed summer. And days and weeks passed, the bright scythes of the reapers glittered in the corn-fields, the branches of the apple-trees bent low, heavy with the red and golden fruit. The hop, hanging in clusters, filled the air with sweet fragrance, and beneath the hazel-bushes, where the nuts hung in great bunches, rested a man and a woman—Summer and his grave consort.

"See," she exclaimed, "what wealth, what blessings surround us. Everything is home-like and good, and yet, I know not why, I long for rest and peace; I can scarcely express what I feel. They are already ploughing the fields again; more and more the people wish for gain. See, the storks are flocking together, and following the plough at a short distance. They are the birds from Egypt, who carried us through the air. Do you remember how we came as children to this land of the north? We brought with us flowers and bright sunshine, and green to the forests; but the wind has been rough with them, and they are now become dark and brown, like the trees of the south, but they do not, like them, bear golden fruit."

"Do you wish to see golden fruit?" said the man, "then rejoice," and he lifted his arm. The leaves of the forest put on colours of red and gold, and bright tints covered the woodlands. The rose-bushes gleamed with scarlet hips, and the branches of

the elder-trees hung down with the weight of the full, dark berries. The wild chestnuts fell ripe from their dark, green shells, and in the forests the violets bloomed for the second time. But the queen of the year became more and more silent and pale.

"It blows cold," she said, "and night brings the damp mist; I long for the land of my childhood." Then she saw the storks fly away every one, and she stretched out her hands towards them. She looked at the empty nests; in one of them grew a long-stalked corn-flower, in another the yellow mustard-seed, as if the nest had been placed there only for its comfort and protection, and the sparrows were flying round them all.

"Tweet, where has the master of the nest gone?" cried one. "I suppose he could not bear it when the wind blew, and therefore he has left this country. I wish him a pleasant journey."

The forest leaves became more and more yellow, leaf after leaf fell, and the stormy winds of Autumn howled. The year was now far advanced, and upon the fallen, yellow leaves lay the queen of the year, looking up with mild eyes at a gleaming star, and her husband stood by her. A gust of wind swept through the foliage, and the leaves fell in a shower. The summer queen was gone, but a butterfly, the last of the year, flew through the cold air. Damp fogs came, icy winds blew, and the long, dark nights of winter approached. The ruler of the year appeared with hair white as snow, but he knew it not; he thought snow-flakes falling from the sky covered his head, as they decked the green fields with a thin, white covering of snow. And then the church bells rang out for Christmas-time.

"The bells are ringing for the new-born year," said the ruler, "soon will a new ruler and his bride be born, and I shall go to rest with my wife in yonder light-giving star."

In the fresh, green fir-wood, where the snow lay all around, stood the angel of Christmas, and consecrated the young trees that were to adorn his feast.

"May there be joy in the rooms, and under the green boughs," said the old ruler of the year. In a few weeks he had become a very old man, with hair as white as snow. "My resting-time

draws near; the young pair of the year will soon claim my crown and sceptre."

"But the night is still thine," said the angel of Christmas, "for power, but not for rest. Let the snow lie warmly upon the tender seed. Learn to endure the thought that another is worshipped whilst thou art still lord. Learn to endure being forgotten while yet thou livest. The hour of thy freedom will come when Spring appears."

"And when will Spring come?" asked Winter.

"It will come when the stork returns."

And with white locks and snowy beard, cold, bent, and hoary, but strong as the wintry storm, and firm as the ice, old Winter sat on the snowdrift-covered hill, looking towards the south, where Winter had sat before, and gazed. The ice glittered, the snow crackled, the skaters skimmed over the polished surface of the lakes; ravens and crows formed a pleasing contrast to the white ground, and not a breath of wind stirred, and in the still air old Winter clenched his fists, and the ice lay fathoms deep between the lands. Then came the sparrows again out of the town, and asked, "Who is that old man?" The raven sat there still, or it might be his son, which is the same thing, and he said to them—

"It is Winter, the old man of the former year; he is not dead, as the calendar says, but he is guardian to the spring, which is coming."

"When will Spring come?" asked the sparrows, "for we shall have better times then, and a better rule. The old times are worth nothing."

And in quiet thought old Winter looked at the leafless forest, where the graceful form and bends of each tree and branch could be seen; and while Winter slept, icy mists came from the clouds and the ruler dreamt of his youthful days and of his manhood, and in the morning dawn the whole forest glittered with hoar frost, which the sun shook from the branches—and this was the summer dream of Winter.

"When will Spring come?" asked the sparrows. "Spring!"

Again the echo sounded from the hills on which the snow lay. The sunshine became warmer, the snow melted, and the birds twittered, "Spring is coming!" And high in the air flew the first stork, and the second followed; a lovely child sat on the back of each, and they sank down on the open field, kissed the earth, and kissed the quiet old man; and, as the mist from the mountain-top, he vanished away and disappeared. And the story of the year was finished.

"This is all very fine, no doubt," said the sparrows, "and it is very beautiful; but it is not according to the calendar, therefore it must be all wrong."

The Conceited Apple-Branch.

It was the month of May. The wind still blew cold; but from bush and tree, field and flower, came the welcome sound, "Spring is come." Wild-flowers in profusion covered the hedges. Under the little apple-tree Spring seemed busy, and told his tale from one of the branches which hung fresh and blooming, and covered with delicate pink blossoms that were just ready to open. The branch well knew how beautiful it was; this knowledge exists as much in the leaf as in the blood; I was therefore not surprised when a nobleman's carriage, in which sat the young countess, stopped in the road just by. She said that an apple-branch was a most lovely object, and an emblem of spring in its most charming aspect. Then the branch was broken off for her, and she held it in her delicate hand, and sheltered it with her silk parasol. Then they drove to the castle, in which were lofty halls and splendid drawing-rooms. Pure white curtains fluttered before the open windows, and beautiful flowers stood in shining, transparent vases; and in one of them, which looked as if it had been cut out of newly-fallen snow, the apple-branch was placed, among some fresh, light twigs of beech. It was a charming sight. Then the branch became proud, which was very much like human nature.

People of every description entered the room, and, according

to their position in society, so dared they to express their admiration. Some few said nothing, others expressed too much, and the apple-branch very soon got to understand that there was as much difference in the characters of human beings as in those of plants and flowers. Some are all for pomp and parade, others have a great deal to do to maintain their own importance, while the rest might be spared without much loss to society. So thought the apple-branch, as he stood before the open window, from which he could see out over gardens and fields, where there were flowers and plants enough for him to think and reflect upon ; some rich and beautiful, some poor and humble indeed.

"Poor, despised herbs," said the apple-branch ; "there is really a difference between them and such as I am. How unhappy they must be, if they can feel as those in my position do ! There is a difference indeed, and so there ought to be, or we should all be equals."

And the apple-branch looked with a sort of pity upon them, especially on a certain little flower that is found in fields and in ditches. No one bound these flowers together in a nosegay ; they were too common ; they were even known to grow between the paving-stones, shooting up everywhere, like bad weeds ; and they bore the very ugly name of "dog-flowers," or "dandelions."

"Poor, despised plants," said the apple-bough, "it is not your fault that you are so ugly, and that you have such an ugly name ; but it is with plants as with men—there must be a difference."

"A difference !" cried the sunbeam, as he kissed the blooming apple-branch, and then kissed the yellow dandelion out in the fields. All were brothers, and the sunbeam kissed them—the poor flowers as well as the rich.

The apple-bough had never thought of the boundless love of God, which extends over all the works of creation, over everything which lives, and moves, and has its being in Him ; he had never thought of the good and beautiful which are so often hidden, but can never remain forgotten by Him—not only among the lower creation, but also among men. The sunbeam, the ray of light, knew better.

"You do not see very far, nor very clearly," he said to the apple-branch. "Which is the despised plant you so specially pity?"

"The dandelion," he replied. "No one ever places it in a nosegay; it is often trodden under foot, there are so many of them; and when they run to seed, they have flowers like wool, which fly away in little pieces over the roads, and cling to the dresses of the people. They are only weeds; but of course there must be weeds. Oh, I am really very thankful that I was not made like one of these flowers."

There came presently across the fields a whole group of children, the youngest of whom was so small that it had to be carried by the others; and when he was seated on the grass, among the yellow flowers, he laughed aloud with joy, kicked out his little legs, rolled about, plucked the yellow flowers, and kissed them in childlike innocence. The elder children broke off the flowers with long stems, bent the stalks one round the other, to form links, and made first a chain for the neck, then one to go across the shoulders, and hang down to the waist, and at last a wreath to wear round the head, so that they looked quite splendid in their garlands of green stems and golden flowers. But the eldest among them gathered carefully the faded flowers, on the stem of which the seed was grouped together, in the form of a white feathery coronal. These loose, airy wool-flowers are very beautiful, and look like fine snowy feathers or down. The children held them to their mouths, and tried to blow away the whole coronal with one puff of the breath. They had been told by their grandmothers that whoever did so would be sure to have new clothes before the end of the year. The despised flower was by this raised to the position of a prophet, or foreteller of events.

"Do you see," said the sunbeam, "do you see the beauty of these flowers? do you see their powers of giving pleasure?"

"Yes, to children," said the apple-bough.

By-and-by an old woman came into the field, and, with a blunt knife without a handle, began to dig round the roots of some of the dandelion-plants, and pull them up. With some of these she

intended to make tea for herself; but the rest she was going to sell to the chemist, and obtain some money.

"But beauty is of higher value than all this," said the apple-tree branch; "only the chosen ones can be admitted into the realms of the beautiful. There is a difference between plants, just as there is a difference between men."

Then the sunbeam spoke of the boundless love of God as seen in creation, and over all that lives, and of the equal distribution of His gifts, both in time and in eternity.

"That is your opinion," said the apple-bough.

The some people came into the room, and, among them, the young countess—the lady who had placed the apple-bough in the transparent vase, so pleasantly beneath the rays of sunlight. She carried in her hand something that seemed like a flower. The object was hidden by two or three great leaves, which covered it like a shield, so that no draught or gust of wind could injure it, and it was carried more carefully than the apple-branch had ever been. Very cautiously the large leaves were removed, and there appeared the feathery seed-crown of the despised yellow dandelion. This was what the lady had so carefully plucked, and carried home so safely covered, so that not one of the delicate feathery arrows of which its mist-like shape was so lightly formed, should flutter away. She now drew it forth quite uninjured, and wondered at its beautiful form, and airy lightness, and singular construction, so soon to be blown away by the wind.

"See," she exclaimed, "how wonderfully God has made this little flower. I will paint it with the apple-branch together. Every one admires the beauty of the apple-bough; but this humble flower has been endowed by Heaven with another kind of loveliness; and although they differ in appearance, both are the children of the realms of beauty."

Then the sunbeam kissed the lowly flower, and he kissed the blooming apple-branch, upon whose leaves appeared a rosy blush.

The Pea-Blossom.

THERE were once five peas in one pod, they were green, the pod was green, and so they believed that the whole world must be green also, which was a very natural conclusion. The pod grew, and the peas grew, they accommodated themselves to their position, and sat all in a row. The sun shone without and warmed the shell, and the rain made it clear and transparent; it was mild and agreeable in broad daylight, and dark at night, as it generally is; and the peas as they sat there grew bigger and bigger, and more thoughtful as they mused, for they felt there must be something for them to do.

"Are we to sit here for ever?" asked one; "shall we not become hard by sitting so long? it seems to me there must be something outside, and I feel sure of it."

And as weeks passed by, the peas became yellow, and the shell became yellow.

"All the world is turning yellow, I suppose," said they—and perhaps they were right.

Suddenly they felt a pull at the shell; it was torn off, and held in human hands, then slipped into the pocket of a jacket in company with other full pods.

"Now we shall soon be opened," said one—just what they all wanted.

"I should like to know which of us will travel farthest," said the smallest of the five; "we shall soon see now."

"What is to happen will happen," said the largest pea.

"Crack," went the shell as it burst, and the five peas rolled out into the bright sunshine. There they lay in a child's hand. A little boy was holding them tightly, and said they were fine peas for his pea-shooter. And immediately he put one in and shot it out.

"Now I am flying out into the wide world," said he; "catch me if you can;" and he was gone in a moment.

"I," said the second, "intend to fly straight to the sun, that

is a shell that lets itself be seen, and it will suit me exactly ;" and away he went.

"We will go to sleep wherever we find ourselves," said the two next, "we shall still be rolling onwards ;" and they did certainly fall on the floor, and roll about before they got into the pea-shooter ; but they were put in for all that. "We shall go farther than the others," said they.

"What is to happen will happen," exclaimed the last, as he was shot out of the pea-shooter ; and as he spoke he flew up against an old board under a garret window, and fell into a little crevice, which was almost filled up with moss and soft earth. The moss closed itself round him, and there he lay, a captive indeed, but not unnoticed by God.

"What is to happen will happen," said he to himself.

Within the little garret lived a poor woman, who went out to clean stoves, chop wood into small pieces, and perform such-like hard work, for she was strong and industrious. Yet she remained always poor, and at home in the garret lay her only daughter, not quite grown up, and very delicate and weak. For a whole year she had kept her bed, and it seemed as if she could neither live nor die.

"She is going to her little sister," said the woman ; "I had but the two children, and it was not an easy thing to support both of them ; but the good God helped me in my work, and took one of them to Himself and provided for her. Now I would gladly keep the other that was left to me, but I suppose they are not to be separated, and my sick girl will very soon go to her sister above." But the sick girl still remained where she was, quietly and patiently she lay all the day long, while her mother was away from home at her work.

Spring came, and one morning early the sun shone brightly through the little window, and threw his rays over the floor of the room. Just as the mother was going to her work, the sick girl fixed her gaze on the lowest pane of the window—"Mother," she exclaimed, "what can that little green thing be that peeps in at the window ? It is moving in the wind."

The mother stepped to the window and half opened it. "Oh!" she said, "there is actually a little pea which has taken root and is putting out its green leaves. How could it have got into this crack? Well, now, here is a little garden for you to amuse yourself with." So the bed of the sick girl was drawn nearer to the window, that she might see the budding plant; and the mother went out to her work.

"Mother, I believe I shall get well," said the sick child in the evening, "the sun has shone in here so brightly and warmly to-day, and the little pea is thriving so well; I shall get on better too, and go out into the warm sunshine again."

"God grant it!" said the mother; she did not believe it would be so. But she propped up with a little stick the green plant which had given her child such pleasant hopes of life, so that it might not be broken by the winds; she tied the piece of string to the window-sill and to the upper part of the frame, so that the pea-tendrils might twine round it when it shot up. And it did shoot up; indeed, it might almost be seen to grow from day to day.

"Now really here is a flower coming," said the old woman one morning, and now at last she began to encourage the hope that her little sick daughter might really recover. She remembered that for some time the child had spoken more cheerfully, and during the last few days had raised herself in bed in the morning to look with sparkling eyes at her little garden which contained only a single pea-plant. A week after, the invalid sat up for the first time a whole hour, feeling quite happy by the open window in the warm sunshine, while outside grew the little plant, and on it a pink pea-blossom in full bloom. The little maiden bent down and gently kissed the delicate leaves. This day was to her like a festival.

"Our heavenly Father Himself has planted that pea, and made it grow and flourish, to bring joy to you and hope to me, my blessed child," said the happy mother, and she smiled at the flower, as if it had been an angel from God.

But what became of the other peas? Why, the one who flew out into the wide world, and said, "Catch me if you can," fell into

a gutter on the roof of a house and ended his travels in the crop of a pigeon. The two lazy ones were carried quite as far, for they also were eaten by pigeons, so they were at least of some use; but the fourth, who wanted to reach the sun, fell into a sink, and lay there in the dirty water for days and weeks, till he had swelled to a great size.

"I am getting beautifully fat," said the pea, "I expect I shall burst at last; no pea could do more than that, I think; I am the most remarkable of all the five which were in the shell." And the sink confirmed his opinion.

But the young maiden stood at the open garret window, with sparkling eyes and the rosy hue of health on her cheeks, she folded her thin hands over the pea-blossom, and thanked God for what He had done.

"I," said the sink, "shall stand up for *my* pea."

The Beetle who went on his Travels.

THERE was once an Emperor who had a horse shod with gold. He had a golden shoe on each foot, and why was this? He was a beautiful creature, with slender legs, bright, intelligent eyes, and a mane that hung down over his neck like a veil. He had carried his master through fire and smoke in the battle-field, with the bullets whistling round him; he had kicked and bitten, and taken part in the fight when the enemy advanced; and, with his master on his back, he had dashed over the fallen foe, and saved the golden crown and the Emperor's life, which was of more value than the brightest gold. This is the reason of the Emperor's horse wearing golden shoes.

A beetle came creeping forth from the stable, where the farrier had been shoeing the horse. "Great ones first, of course," said he, "and then the little ones; but size is not always a proof of greatness." He stretched out his thin leg as he spoke.

"And pray what do you want?" asked the farrier.

"Golden shoes," replied the beetle.

"Why, you must be out of your senses," cried the farrier. "Golden shoes for you, indeed!"

"Yes, certainly; golden shoes," replied the beetle. "Am I not just as good as that great creature yonder, who is waited upon and brushed, and his food and drink placed before him? And don't I belong to the royal stables?"

"But why does the horse have golden shoes?" asked the farrier; "of course you understand the reason?"

"Understand! Well, I understand that it is a personal slight to me," cried the beetle. "It is done to annoy me, so I intend to go out into the world and seek my fortune."

"Go along with you," said the farrier.

"You're a rude fellow," cried the beetle, as he walked out of the stable; and then he flew for a short distance, till he found himself in a beautiful flower-garden, all fragrant with roses and lavender. The lady-birds, with red and black shells on their backs, and delicate wings, were flying about, and one of them said, "Is it not sweet and lovely here? Oh, how beautiful everything is."

"I am accustomed to better things," said the beetle. "Do you call this beautiful? Why, there is not even a dung-heap." Then he went on, and under the shadow of a large haystack he found a caterpillar crawling along. "How beautiful this world is!" said the caterpillar. "The sun is so warm, I quite enjoy it. And soon I shall go to sleep, and die, as they call it, but I shall wake up with beautiful wings to fly with, as a butterfly."

"How conceited you are!" exclaimed the beetle. "Fly about as a butterfly, indeed! what of that? I have come out of the Emperor's stable, and no one there, not even the Emperor's horse, who in fact wears my cast-off golden shoes, has any idea of flying, excepting myself. To have wings and fly! why, I can do that already;" and so saying, he spread his wings and flew away. "I don't want to be disgusted," he said to himself, "and yet I can't help it." Soon after, he fell down upon an extensive lawn, and for a time pretended to sleep, but at last fell asleep in earnest.

Suddenly a heavy shower of rain came falling from the clouds. The beetle woke up with the noise and would have been glad to creep into the earth for shelter, but he could not. He was tumbled over and over with the rain, sometimes swimming on his stomach and sometimes on his back; and as for flying, that was out of the question. He began to doubt whether he should escape with his life, so he remained, quietly lying where he was. After a while the weather cleared up a little, and the beetle was able to rub the water from his eyes, and look about him. He saw something gleaming, and he managed to make his way up to it. It was linen which had been laid to bleach on the grass. He crept into a fold of the damp linen, which certainly was not so comfortable a place to lie in as the warm stable, but there was nothing better, so he remained lying there for a whole day and night, and the rain kept on all the time. Towards morning he crept out of his hiding-place, feeling in a very bad temper with the climate. Two frogs were sitting on the linen, and their bright eyes actually glistened with pleasure.

"Wonderful weather this," cried one of them, "and so refreshing. This linen holds the water together so beautifully, that my hind legs quiver as if I were going to swim."

"I should like to know," said the other, "if the swallow who flies so far in her many journeys to foreign lands, ever met with a better climate than this. What delicious moisture! It is as pleasant as lying in a wet ditch. I am sure any one who does not enjoy this has no love for his fatherland.

"Have you ever been in the Emperor's stable?" asked the beetle. "There the moisture is warm and refreshing; that's the climate for me, but I could not take it with me on my travels. Is there not even a dunghill here in this garden, where a person of rank, like myself, could take up his abode and feel at home?" But the frogs either did not or would not understand him.

"I never ask a question twice," said the beetle, after he had asked this one three times, and received no answer. Then he went on a little farther, and stumbled against a piece of broken crockery-ware, which certainly ought not to have been lying there.

But as it was there, it formed a good shelter against wind and weather to several families of earwigs who dwelt in it. Their requirements were not many, they were very sociable, and full of affection for their children, so much so that each mother considered her own child the most beautiful and clever of them all.

"Our son has engaged himself," said one mother, "dear innocent boy; his greatest ambition is that he may one day creep into a clergyman's ear. That is a very artless and loveable wish; and being engaged will keep him steady. What happiness for a mother!"

"Our son," said another, "had scarcely crept out of the egg, when he was off on his travels. He is all life and spirits, I expect he will wear out his horns with running. How charming this is for a mother, is it not, Mr. Beetle?" for she knew the stranger by his horny coat.

"You are both quite right," said he; so they begged him to walk in, that is to come as far as he could under the broken piece of earthenware.

"Now you shall also see my little earwigs," said a third and a fourth mother, "they are lovely little things, and highly amusing. They are never ill-behaved, excepting when they are uncomfortable, which unfortunately often happens at their age."

Thus each mother spoke of her baby, and their babies talked after their own fashion, and made use of the little nippers they have in their tails to nip the beard of the beetle.

"They are always busy about something, the little rogues," said the mother, beaming with maternal pride; but the beetle felt it a bore, and he therefore inquired the way to the nearest dung-heap.

"That is quite out in the great world, on the other side of the ditch," answered an earwig; "I hope none of my children will ever go so far, it would be the death of me."

"But I shall try to get so far," said the beetle, and he walked off without taking any formal leave, which is considered a polite thing to do.

When he arrived at the ditch, he met several friends, all of them beetles. "We live here," they said, "and we are very comfortable.

May we ask you to step down into this rich mud. You must be fatigued after your journey."

"Certainly," said the beetle, "I shall be most happy; I have been exposed to the rain, and have had to lie upon linen, and cleanliness is a thing that greatly exhausts me; I have also pains in one of my wings from standing in the draught under a piece of broken crockery. It is really quite refreshing to be with one's own kindred again."

"Perhaps you came from a dung-heap," observed the oldest of them.

"No, indeed, I came from a much grander place," replied the beetle; "I came from the Emperor's stable, where I was born, with golden shoes on my feet. I am travelling on a secret embassy, but you must not ask me any questions, for I cannot betray my secret."

Then the beetle stepped down into the rich mud, where sat three young lady beetles, who tittered, because they did not know what to say.

"None of them are engaged yet," said their mother, and the beetle maidens tittered again, this time quite in confusion.

"I have never seen greater beauties, even in the royal stables," exclaimed the beetle, who was now resting himself.

"Don't spoil my girls," said the mother; "and don't talk to them, pray, unless you have serious intentions."

But of course the beetle's intentions were serious, and after a while our friend was engaged. The mother gave them her blessing, and all the other beetles cried "Hurrah."

Immediately after the betrothal came the marriage, for there was no reason to delay. The following day passed very pleasantly, and the next was tolerably comfortable; but on the third it became necessary for him to think of getting food for his wife, and, perhaps, for children.

"I have allowed myself to be taken in," said our beetle to himself, "and now there's nothing to be done but to take them in, in return."

No sooner said than done. Away he went, and stayed away

all day and all night, and his wife remained behind a forsaken widow.

"Oh," said the other beetles, "this fellow that we have received into our family is nothing but a complete vagabond. He has gone away and left his wife a burden upon our hands."

"Well, she can be unmarried again, and remain here with my other daughters," said the mother. "Fie on the villain that forsook her!"

In the meantime the beetle, who had sailed across the ditch on a cabbage leaf, had been journeying on the other side. In the morning two persons came up to the ditch. When they saw him they took him up and turned him over and over, looking very learned all the time, especially one, who was a boy. "Allah sees the black beetle in the black stone, and the black rock. Is not that written in the Koran?" he asked.

Then he translated the beetle's name into Latin, and said a great deal upon the creature's nature and history. The second person, who was older and a scholar, proposed to carry the beetle home, as they wanted just such good specimens as this. Our beetle considered this speech a great insult, so he flew suddenly out of the speaker's hand. His wings were dry now, so they carried him to a great distance, till at last he reached a hothouse, where a sash of the glass roof was partly open, so he quietly slipped in and buried himself in the warm earth. "It is very comfortable here," he said to himself, and soon after fell asleep. Then he dreamed that the Emperor's horse was dying, and had left him his golden shoes, and also promised that he should have two more. All this was very delightful, and when the beetle woke up he crept forth and looked around him. What a splendid place the hothouse was! At the back, large palm-trees were growing, and the sunlight made the leaves look quite glossy; and beneath them what a profusion of luxuriant green, and of flowers red like flame, yellow as amber, or white as new-fallen snow! "What a wonderful quantity of plants!" cried the beetle; "how good they will taste when they are decayed! This is a capital store-room. There must certainly be some relations of mine living here; I will just

see if I can find any one with whom I can associate. I'm proud, certainly; but I'm also proud of being so." Then he prowled about in the earth, and thought what a pleasant dream that was about the dying horse, and the golden shoes he had inherited. Suddenly a hand seized the beetle, and squeezed him, and turned him round and round. The gardener's little son and his playfellow had come into the hothouse, and, seeing the beetle, wanted to have some fun with him. First, he was wrapped in a vine-leaf and put into a warm trousers' pocket. He twisted and turned about with all his might, but he got a good squeeze from the boy's hand, as a hint for him to keep quiet. Then the boy went quickly towards a lake that lay at the end of the garden. Here the beetle was put into an old broken wooden shoe, in which a little stick had been fastened upright for a mast, and to this mast the beetle was bound with a piece of worsted. Now he was a sailor, and had to sail away. The lake was not very large, but to the beetle it seemed an ocean, and he was so astonished at its size that he fell over on his back, and kicked out his legs. Then the little ship sailed away; sometimes the current of the water seized it, but whenever it went too far from the shore one of the boys turned up his trousers, and went in after it, and brought it back to land. But at last, just as it went merrily out again, the two boys were called, and so angrily, that they hastened to obey, and ran away as fast as they could from the pond, so that the little ship was left to its fate. It was carried away farther and farther from the shore, till it reached the open sea. This was a terrible prospect for the beetle, for he could not escape in consequence of being bound to the mast. Then a fly came and paid him a visit, "What beautiful weather," said the fly; "I shall rest here and sun myself. You must have a pleasant time of it."

"You speak without knowing the facts," replied the beetle; "don't you see that I am a prisoner?"

"Ah, but I'm not a prisoner," remarked the fly, and away he flew.

"Well, now I know the world," said the beetle to himself; "it's an abominable world; I'm the only respectable person in it.

First, they refuse me my golden shoes ; then I have to lie on damp linen, and to stand in a draught ; and to crown all, they fasten a wife upon me. Then, when I have made a step forward in the world, and found out a comfortable position, just as I could wish it to be, one of these human boys comes and ties me up, and leaves me to the mercy of the wild waves, while the Emperor's favourite horse goes prancing about proudly on his golden shoes. This vexes me more than anything. But it is useless to look for sympathy in this world. My career has been very interesting, but what's the use of that if nobody knows anything about it ? The world does not deserve to be made acquainted with my adventures, for it ought to have given me golden shoes when the Emperor's horse was shod, and I stretched out my feet to be shod, too. If I had received golden shoes I should have been an ornament to the stable ; now I am lost to the stable and to the world. It is all over with me."

But all was not yet over. A boat, in which were a few young girls, came rowing up. "Look, yonder is an old wooden shoe sailing along," said one of the young girls.

"And there's a poor little creature bound fast in it," said another.

The boat now came close to our beetle's ship, and the young girls fished it out of the water. One of them drew a small pair of scissors from her pocket, and cut the worsted without hurting the beetle, and when she stepped on shore she placed him on the grass. "There," she said, "creep away, or fly, if thou canst. It is a splendid thing to have thy liberty." Away flew the beetle, straight through the open window of a large building ; there he sank down, tired and exhausted, exactly on the mane of the Emperor's favourite horse, who was standing in his stable ; and the beetle found himself at home again. For some time he clung to the mane, that he might recover himself. "Well," he said, "here I am, seated on the Emperor's favourite horse,—sitting upon him as if I were the Emperor himself. But what was it the farrier asked me ? Ah, I remember now,—that's a good thought,—he asked me why the golden shoes were given to the horse. The

answer is quite clear to me, now. They were given to the horse on *my* account." And this reflection put the beetle into a good temper. The sun's rays also came streaming into the stable, and shone upon him, and made the place lively and bright. "Travelling expands the mind very much," said the beetle. "The world is not so bad after all, if you know how to take things as they come."

The Bottle Neck.

Close to the corner of a street, among other abodes of poverty, stood an exceedingly tall, narrow house, which had been so knocked about by time that it seemed out of joint in every direction. This house was inhabited by poor people, but the deepest poverty was apparent in the garret lodging in the gable. In front of the little window, an old, bent bird-cage hung in the sunshine, which had not even a proper water-glass, but instead of it the broken neck of a bottle, turned upside down, and a cork stuck in to make it hold the water with which it was filled. An old maid stood at the window; she had hung chickweed over the cage, and the little linnet which it contained hopped from perch to perch and sang and twittered merrily.

"Yes, it's all very well for you to sing," said the bottle neck: that is, he did not really speak the words as we do, for the neck of a bottle cannot speak; but he thought them to himself in his own mind, just as people sometimes talk quietly to themselves.

"Yes, you may sing very well, you have all your limbs uninjured; you should feel what it is like to lose your body, and have only a neck and a mouth left, with a cork stuck in it, as I have: you wouldn't sing then, I know. After all, it is just as well that there are some who can be happy. I have no reason to sing, nor could I sing now if I were ever so happy; but when I was a whole bottle, and they rubbed me with a cork, didn't I sing then? I used to be called a complete lark. I remember when I went out to a picnic with the furrier's family, on the day his daughter was

betrothed,—it seems as if it only happened yesterday. I have gone through a great deal in my time, when I come to recollect: I have been in the fire and in the water; I have been deep in the earth, and have mounted higher in the air than most other people, and now I am swinging here, outside a bird-cage, in the air and the sunshine. Oh, indeed, it would be worth while to hear my history; but I do not speak it aloud, for a good reason—because I cannot."

Then the bottle neck related his history, which was really rather remarkable; he, in fact, related it to himself, or, at least, thought it in his own mind. The little bird sang his own song merrily; in the street below there was driving and running to and fro, every one thought of his own affairs, or perhaps of nothing at all; but the bottle neck thought deeply. He thought of the blazing furnace in the factory, where he had been blown into life; he remembered how hot it felt when he was placed in the heated oven, the home from which he sprang, and that he had a strong inclination to leap out again directly; but after a while it became cooler, and he found himself very comfortable. He had been placed in a row, with a whole regiment of his brothers and sisters all brought out of the same furnace; some of them had certainly been blown into champagne bottles, and others into beer bottles, which made a little difference between them. In the world it often happens that a beer bottle may contain the most precious wine, and a champagne bottle be filled with blacking; but even in decay it may always be seen whether a man has been well born. Nobility remains noble, as a champagne bottle remains the same, even with blacking in its interior. When the bottles were packed our bottle was packed amongst them; it little expected then to finish its career as a bottle neck, or to be used as a water-glass to a bird's-cage, which is, after all, a place of honour, for it is to be of some use in the world. The bottle did not behold the light of day again, until it was unpacked with the rest in the wine merchant's cellar, and, for the first time, rinsed with water, which caused very curious sensations. There it lay empty, and without a cork, and it had a peculiar feeling, as if it wanted something it

knew not what. At last it was filled with rich and costly wine, a cork was placed in it, and sealed down. Then it was labelled "first quality," as if it had carried off the first prize at an examination; however, the wine and the bottle were both good, and while we are young is the time for poetry. There were sounds of song within the bottle, of things it could not understand, of green sunny mountains, where the vines grow and where the merry vine-dressers laugh, sing, and are merry. "Ah, how beautiful is life!" All these tones of joy and song in the bottle were like the working of a young poet's brain, who often knows not the meaning of the tones which are sounding within him. One morning the bottle found a purchaser in the furrier's apprentice, who was told to bring one of the best bottles of wine. It was placed in the provision basket with ham and cheese and sausages. The sweetest fresh butter and the finest bread were put into the basket by the furrier's daughter herself, for she packed it. She was young and pretty; her brown eyes laughed, and a smile lingered round her mouth as sweet as that in her eyes. She had delicate hands, beautifully white, and her neck was whiter still. It could easily be seen that she was a very lovely girl, and as yet she was not engaged. The provision basket lay in the lap of the young girl as the family drove out to the forest, and the neck of the bottle peeped out from between the folds of the white napkin. There was the red wax on the cork, and the bottle looked straight at the young girl's face, and also at the face of the young sailor who sat near her. He was a young friend, the son of a portrait painter. He had lately passed his examination with honour, as mate, and the next morning he was to sail in his ship to a distant coast. There had been a great deal of talk on this subject while the basket was being packed, and during this conversation the eyes and the mouth of the furrier's daughter did not wear a very joyful expression. The young people wandered away into the green wood, and talked together. What did they talk about? The bottle could not say, for he was in the provision basket. It remained there a long time; but when at last it was brought forth it appeared as if something pleasant had happened, for

every one was laughing; the furrier's daughter laughed too, but she said very little, and her cheeks were like two roses. Then her father took the bottle and the cork-screw into his hands. What a strange sensation it was to have the cork drawn for the first time! The bottle could never after that forget the performance of that moment; indeed there was quite a convulsion within him as the cork flew out, and a gurgling sound as the wine was poured forth into the glasses.

"Long life to the betrothed," cried the papa, and every glass was emptied to the dregs, while the young sailor kissed his beautiful bride.

"Happiness and blessing to you both," said the old people —father and mother; and the young man filled the glasses again.

"Safe return, and a wedding this day next year," he cried; and when the glasses were empty he took the bottle, raised it on high, and said, "Thou hast been present here on the happiest day of my life; thou shalt never be used by others!" So saying, he hurled it high in the air.

The furrier's daughter thought she should never see it again, but she was mistaken. It fell among the rushes on the borders of a little woodland lake. The bottle neck remembered well how long it lay there unseen: "I gave them wine, and they gave me muddy water," he had said to himself, "but I suppose it was all well meant." He could no longer see the betrothed couple, nor the cheerful old people; but for a long time he could hear them rejoicing and singing. At length there came by two peasant boys, who peeped in among the reeds and spied out the bottle. Then they took it up and carried it home with them, so that once more it was provided for. At home in their wooden cottage these boys had an elder brother, a sailor, who was about to start on a long voyage. He had been there the day before to say farewell, and his mother was now very busy packing up various things for him to take with him on his voyage. In the evening his father was going to carry the parcel to the town to see his son once more, and take him a farewell greeting from his mother. A small bottle had

already been filled with herb tea, mixed with brandy, and wrapped in a parcel: but when the boys came in they brought with them a larger and stronger bottle, which they had found. This bottle would hold much more than the little one, and they all said the brandy would be good for complaints of the stomach, especially as it was mixed with medical herbs. The liquid which they now poured into the bottle was not like the red wine with which it had once been filled; these were bitter drops, but they are of great use sometimes—for the stomach. The new large bottle was to go, not the little one: so the bottle once more started on its travels. It was taken on board (for Peter Jensen was one of the crew) the very same ship in which the young mate was to sail. But the mate did not see the bottle: indeed, if he had he would not have known it, or supposed it was the one out of which they had drunk to the felicity of the betrothed and to the prospect of a marriage on his own happy return. Certainly the bottle no longer poured forth wine, but it contained something quite as good; and so it happened that whenever Peter Jensen brought it out, his messmates gave it the name of "the apothecary," for it contained the best medicine to cure the stomach, and he gave it out quite willingly as long as a drop remained. Those were happy days, and the bottle would sing when rubbed with a cork, and it was called a "great lark," "Peter Jensen's lark."

Long days and months rolled by, during which the bottle stood empty in a corner, when a storm arose—whether on the passage out or home it could not tell, for it had never been ashore. It was a terrible storm, great waves arose, darkly heaving and tossing the vessel to and fro. The mainmast was split asunder, the ship sprang a leak, and the pumps became useless, while all around was black as night. At the last moment, when the ship was sinking, the young mate wrote on a piece of paper, "We are going down: God's will be done." Then he wrote the name of his betrothed, his own name, and that of the ship. Then he put the leaf in an empty bottle that happened to be at hand, corked it down tightly, and threw it into the foaming sea. He knew not that it was the very same bottle from which the goblet of joy and hope had once been filled for him,

and now it was tossing on the waves with his last greeting, and a message from the dead. The ship sank, and the crew sank with her ; but the bottle flew on like a bird, for it bore within it a loving letter from a loving heart. And as the sun rose and set, the bottle felt as at the time of its first existence, when in the heated glowing stove it had a longing to fly away. It outlived the storms and the calm, it struck against no rocks, was not devoured by sharks, but drifted on for more than a year, sometimes towards the north, sometimes towards the south, just as the current carried it. It was in all other ways its own master, but even of that one may get tired. The written leaf, the last farewell of the bridegroom to his bride, would only bring sorrow when once it reached her hands ; but where were those hands, so soft and delicate, which had once spread the table-cloth on the fresh grass in the green wood, on the day of her betrothal ? Ah, yes ! where was the furrier's daughter ? and where was the land which might lie nearest to her home ?

The bottle knew not, it travelled onward and onward, and at last all this wandering about became wearisome : at all events it was not its usual occupation. But it had to travel, till at length it reached land—a foreign country. Not a word spoken in this country could the bottle understand ; it was a language it had never before heard, and it is a great loss not to be able to understand a language. The bottle was fished out of the water, and examined on all sides. The little letter contained within it was discovered, taken out, and turned and twisted in every direction ; but the people could not understand what was written upon it. They could be quite sure that the bottle had been thrown overboard from a vessel, and that something about it was written on this paper : but what was written ? that was the question,—so the paper was put back into the bottle, and then both were put away in a large cupboard of one of the great houses of the town. Whenever any strangers arrived, the paper was taken out and turned over and over, so that the address, which was only written in pencil, became almost illegible, and at last no one could distinguish any letters on it at all. For a whole year the bottle remained standing in the cupboard, and then it was taken up to the loft,

where it soon became covered with dust and cobwebs. Ah! how often then it thought of those better days—of the times when in the fresh, green wood, it had poured forth rich wine; or, while rocked by the swelling waves, it had carried in its bosom a secret, a letter, a last parting sigh. For full twenty years it stood in the loft, and it might have stayed there longer but that the house was going to be rebuilt. The bottle was discovered when the roof was taken off; they talked about it, but the bottle did not understand what they said—a language is not to be learnt by living in a loft, even for twenty years. "If I had been downstairs in the room," thought the bottle, "I might have learnt it." It was now washed and rinsed, which process was really quite necessary, and afterwards it looked clean and transparent, and felt young again in its old age; but the paper which it had carried so faithfully was destroyed in the washing. They filled the bottle with seeds, though it scarcely knew what had been placed in it. Then they corked it down tightly, and carefully wrapped it up. There not even the light of a torch or lantern could reach it, much less the brightness of the sun or moon. "And yet," thought the bottle, "men go on a journey that they may see as much as possible, and I can see nothing." However, it did something quite as important; it travelled to the place of its destination, and was unpacked.

"What trouble they have taken with the bottle over yonder!" said one, "and very likely it is broken after all." But the bottle was not broken, and, better still, it understood every word that was said: this language it had heard at the furnaces and at the wine merchant's; in the forest and on the ship,—it was the only good old language it could understand. It had returned home, and the language was as a welcome greeting. For very joy, it felt ready to jump out of people's hands, and scarcely noticed that its cork had been drawn, and its contents emptied out, till it found itself carried to a cellar, to be left there and forgotten. "There's no place like home, even if it's a cellar." It never occurred to him to think that he might lie there for years, he felt so comfortable. For many long years he remained in the cellar, till at last

some people came to carry away the bottles, and ours amongst the number.

Out in a garden there was a great festival. Brilliant lamps hung in festoons from tree to tree; and paper lanterns, through which the light shone till they looked like transparent tulips. It was a beautiful evening, and the weather mild and clear. The stars twinkled; and on the new moon, which was in the form of a crescent, lay the shadowy disc of the whole moon, that looked like a grey globe with a golden rim: it was a beautiful sight for those who had good eyes. The illumination extended even to the most retired of the garden walks, though none were so retired that any one need lose himself there. In the borders were placed bottles, each containing a light, and among them the bottle with which we are acquainted, and whose fate it was, one day, to be only a bottle neck, and to serve as a water-glass to a bird's-cage. Everything here appeared lovely to our bottle, for it was again in the green wood, amid joy and feasting: again it heard music and song, and the noise and murmur of a crowd, especially in that part of the garden where the lamps blazed, and the paper lanterns displayed their brilliant colours. It stood in a distant walk certainly, but a place pleasant for contemplation; and it carried a light, and was at once useful and ornamental. In such an hour it is easy to forget that one has spent twenty years in a loft, and it is a good thing to be able to do so. Close before the bottle passed a single pair, like the bridal pair—the mate and the furrier's daughter—who had so long ago wandered in the wood. It seemed to the bottle as if he were living that time over again. Not only the guests but other people were walking in the garden, who were allowed to witness the splendour and the festivities. Among the latter came an old maid, who seemed to be quite alone in the world. She was thinking, like the bottle, of the green wood, and of a young betrothed pair, who were closely connected with herself; she was thinking of that hour, the happiest of her life, in which she had taken part, when she had herself been one of that betrothed pair; such hours are never to be forgotten, let a maiden be as old as she may. But she did not recognise the bottle, neither did the bottle

notice the old maid. And so we often pass each other in the world when we meet without recognising each other, as did these two, even while together in the same town.

The bottle was taken from the garden, and again sent to a wine merchant, where it was once more filled with wine, and sold to an aëronaut, who was to make an ascent in his balloon on the following Sunday. A great crowd assembled to witness the sight ; military music had been engaged, and many other preparations made. The bottle saw it all from the basket in which he lay close to a live rabbit. The rabbit was quite excited because he knew that he was to be taken up, and let down again in a parachute. The bottle, however, knew nothing of the "up," or the "down ;" he saw only that the balloon was swelling larger and larger till it could swell no more and began to rise and be restless. Then the ropes which held it were cut through, and the aërial ship rose in the air with the aëronaut and the basket containing the bottle and the rabbit, while the music sounded and all the people shouted "Hurrah."

"This is a wonderful journey up into the air," thought the bottle ; "it is a new way of sailing, and here, at least, there is no fear of striking against anything."

Thousands of people gazed at the balloon, and the old maid who was in the garden saw it also ; for she stood at the open window of the garret, by which hung the cage containing the linnet, who then had no water-glass, but was obliged to be contented with an old cup. In the window-sill stood a myrtle in a pot, and this had been pushed a little on one side, that it might not fall out ; for the old maid was leaning out of the window, that she might see. And she did see distinctly the aëronaut in the balloon, and how he let down the rabbit in the parachute, and then drank to the health of all the spectators in the wine from the bottle. After doing this, he hurled it high into the air. How little she thought that this was the very same bottle which her friend had thrown aloft in her honour, on that happy day of rejoicing, in the green wood, in her youthful days ! The bottle had no time to think, when raised so suddenly ; and before it was aware, it reached the

highest point it had ever attained in its life. Steeples and roofs lay far, far beneath it, and the people looked as tiny as possible. Then it began to descend much more rapidly than the rabbit had done, made somersaults in the air, and felt itself quite young and unfettered, although it was half full of wine. But this did not last long. What a journey it was! All the people could see the bottle; for the sun shone upon it. The balloon was already far away, and very soon the bottle was far away also; for it fell upon a roof, and broke in pieces. But the pieces had got such an impetus in them, that they could not stop themselves. They went jumping and rolling about, till at last they fell into the courtyard, and were broken into still smaller pieces; only the neck of the bottle managed to keep whole, and it was broken off as clean as if it had been cut with a diamond.

"That would make a capital bird's glass," said one of the cellarmen; but none of them had either a bird or a cage, and it was not to be expected they would provide one just because they had found a bottle neck that could be used as a glass. But the old maid who lived in the garret had a bird, and it really might be useful to her; so the bottle neck was provided with a cork, and taken up to her; and, as it often happens in life, the part that had been uppermost was now turned downwards, and it was filled with fresh water. Then they hung it in the cage of the little bird, who sang and twittered more merrily than ever.

"Ah, you have good reason to sing," said the bottle neck, which was looked upon as something very remarkable, because it had been in a balloon; nothing further was known of its history. As it hung there in the bird's-cage, it could hear the noise and murmur of the people in the street below, as well as the conversation of the old maid in the room within An old friend had just come to visit her, and they talked, not about the bottle neck, but of the myrtle in the window.

"No, you must not spend a dollar for your daughter's bridal bouquet," said the old maid; "you shall have a beautiful little bunch for a nosegay, full of blossoms. Do you see how splendidly the tree has grown? It has been raised from only a little sprig of

myrtle that you gave me on the day after my betrothal, and from which I was to make my own bridal bouquet when a year had passed; but that day never came: the eyes were closed which were to have been my light and joy through life. In the depths of the sea my beloved sleeps sweetly; the myrtle has become an old tree, and I am a still older woman. Before the sprig you gave me faded, I took a spray and planted it in the earth; and now, as you see, it has become a large tree, and a bunch of the blossoms shall at last appear at a wedding festival, in the bouquet of your daughter."

There were tears in the eyes of the old maid, as she spoke of the beloved of her youth, and of their betrothal in the wood. Many thoughts came into her mind; but the thought never came, that quite close to her, in that very window, was a remembrance of those olden times,—the neck of the bottle which had, as it were, shouted for joy when the cork flew out with a bang on the betrothal day. But the bottle neck did not recognise the old maid; he had not been listening to what she had related, perhaps because he was thinking so much about her.

The Portuguese Duck.

A DUCK once arrived from Portugal, but there were some who said she came from Spain, which is almost the same thing. At all events, she was called the "Portuguese," and she laid eggs, was killed, and cooked, and there was an end of her. But the ducklings which crept forth from her eggs were also called "Portuguese," and about that there may be some question. But of all the family one only remained in the duckyard, which may be called a farmyard, as the chickens were admitted, and the cock strutted about in a very hostile manner. "He annoys me with his loud crowing," said the Portuguese duck; "but still, he's a handsome bird, there's no denying that, although he's not a drake. He ought to moderate his voice, like those little birds who are singing in the lime-trees over there in our neighbour's garden,

but that is an art only acquired in polite society. How sweetly they sing there; it is quite a pleasure to listen to them! I call it Portuguese singing. If I had only such a little singing-bird, I'd be kind and good as a mother to him, for it's in my nature,—in my Portuguese blood."

While she was speaking, one of the little singing-birds came tumbling head over heels from the roof into the yard. The cat was after him, but he had escaped from her with a broken wing, and so came tumbling into the yard. "That's just like the cat, she's a villain," said the Portuguese duck. "I remember her ways when I had children of my own. How can such a creature be allowed to live, and wander about upon the roofs. I don't think they allow such things in Portugal." She pitied the little singing-birds, and so did all the other ducks who were not Portuguese.

"Poor little creature!" they said, one after another, as they came up. "We can't sing, certainly; but we have a sounding-board, or something of the kind, within us; we can feel that, though we don't talk about it."

"But I can talk," said the Portuguese duck; "and I'll do something for the little fellow; it's my duty;" and she stepped into the water-trough, and beat her wings upon the water so strongly that the little bird was nearly drowned by a shower-bath; but the duck meant it kindly. "That is a good deed," she said; "I hope the others will take example by it."

"Tweet, tweet!" said the little bird, for one of his wings being broken, he found it difficult to shake himself; but he quite understood that the bath was meant kindly, and he said, "You are very kind-hearted, madam;" but he did not wish for a second bath.

"I have never thought about my heart," replied the Portuguese duck; "but I know that I love all my fellow-creatures, except the cat, and nobody can expect me to love her, for she ate up two of my ducklings. But pray make yourself at home; it is easy to make one's self comfortable. I am myself from a foreign country, as you may see by my bearing and my feathery dress. My drake is a native of these parts; he's not of my race; but I am not

proud on that account. If any one here can understand you, I may say positively I am that person."

"She's quite full of 'Portulak,'" said a little common duck, who was witty. All the common ducks considered the word "Portulak" a good joke, for it sounded like Portugal. They nudged each other, and said, "Quack! that was witty!"

Then the other ducks began to notice the little bird. "The Portuguese has certainly a great flow of language," they said to the little bird. "For our part, we don't care to fill our beaks with such long words, but we sympathise with you quite as much. If we don't do anything else, we can walk about with you everywhere, and we think that the best thing we can do."

"You have a lovely voice," said one of the eldest ducks; "it must be a great satisfaction to you to be able to give so much pleasure as you do. I am certainly no judge of your singing, so I keep my beak shut, which is better than talking nonsense, as others do."

"Don't plague him so," interposed the Portuguese duck; "he requires rest and nursing. My little singing-bird, do you wish me to prepare another bath for you?"

"Oh, no! no! pray let me be dry," implored the little bird.

"The water-cure is the only remedy for me, when I am not well," said the Portuguese. "Amusement, too, is very beneficial. The fowls from the neighbourhood will soon be here to pay you a visit. There are two Cochin Chinese amongst them; they wear feathers on their legs, and are well educated. They have been brought from a great distance, and consequently I treat them with greater respect than I do the others."

Then the fowls arrived, and the cock was good enough to-day to keep from being rude. "You are a real songster," he said, "and you do as much with your little voice as it is possible to do; but there requires more noise and shrillness in any one who wishes it to be known who he is."

The two Chinese were quite enchanted with the appearance of the singing-bird. His feathers had been much ruffled by his bath, so that he seemed to them quite like a tiny Chinese fowl. "He's

charming," they said to each other, and began a conversation with him in whispers, using the most aristocratic Chinese dialect: "We are of the same race as yourself," they said. "The ducks, even the Portuguese, are all aquatic birds, as you must have noticed. You do not know us yet,—very few know us, or give themselves the trouble to make our acquaintance, not even any of the fowls, though we are born to occupy a higher grade in society than most of them. But that does not disturb us, we quietly go on in our own way among the rest, whose ideas are certainly not ours; for we look at the bright side of things, and only speak of what is good, although that is sometimes very difficult to find, where none exists. Except ourselves and the cock there is not one in the yard who can be called talented or polite. It cannot even be said of the ducks, and we warn you, little bird, not to trust that one yonder, with the short tail feathers, for she is cunning; that curiously marked one, with the crooked stripes on her wings, is a mischief-maker, and never lets any one have the last word, though she is always in the wrong. The fat duck yonder speaks evil of every one, and that is against our principles. If we have nothing good to tell, we close our beaks. The Portuguese is the only one who has had any education, and with whom we can associate, but she is passionate, and talks too much about 'Portugal.'"

"I wonder what those two Chinese are whispering about," whispered one duck to another; "they are always doing it, and it annoys me. We never speak to them."

Now the drake came up, and he thought the little singing-bird was a sparrow. "Well, I don't understand the difference," he said; "it appears to me all the same. He's only a plaything, and if people will have playthings, why let them, I say."

"Don't take any notice of what he says," whispered the Portuguese; "he's very well in matters of business, and with him business is placed before everything. But now I shall lie down and have a little rest. It is a duty we owe to ourselves that we may be nice and fat when we come to be embalmed with sage and onions and apples." So she laid herself down in the sun and winked with one eye; she had a very comfortable place, and felt

so comfortable that she fell asleep. The little singing-bird busied himself for some time with his broken wing, and at last he lay down, too, quite close to his protectress. The sun shone warm and bright, and he found out that it was a very good place. But the fowls of the neighbourhood were all awake, and, to tell the truth, they had paid a visit to the duckyard, simply and solely to find food for themselves. The Chinese were the first to leave, and the other fowls soon followed them.

The witty little duck said of the Portuguese, that the old lady was getting quite a "doting ducky." All the other ducks laughed at this. "Doting ducky," they whispered, "oh, that's too 'witty!'" And then they repeated the former joke about "Portulak," and declared it was most amusing. Then they all lay down to have a nap.

They had been lying asleep for some time, when suddenly something was thrown into the yard for them to eat. It came down with such a bang, that the whole company started up and clapped their wings. The Portuguese awoke too, and rushed over to the other side: in so doing she trod upon the little singing-bird.

"Tweet," he cried; "you trod very hard upon me, madam."

"Well then, why do you lie in my way?" she retorted, "you must not be so touchy. I have nerves of my own, but I do not cry 'tweet.'"

"Don't be angry," said the little bird; "the 'tweet' slipped out of my beak unawares."

The Portuguese did not listen to him, but began eating as fast as she could, and made a good meal. When she had finished, she lay down again, and the little bird, who wished to be amiable, began to sing,—

"Chirp and twitter,
The dew-drops glitter,
In the hours of sunny spring;
I'll sing my best,
Till I go to rest,
With my head behind my wing."

"Now I want rest after my dinner," said the Portuguese; "you must conform to the rules of the house while you are here. I want to sleep now."

The little bird was quite taken aback, for he meant it kindly. When madam awoke afterwards, there he stood before her with a little corn he had found, and laid it at her feet; but as she had not slept well, she was naturally in a bad temper. "Give that to a chicken," she said, "and don't be always standing in my way."

"Why are you angry with me?" replied the little singing-bird, "what have I done?"

"Done!" repeated the Portuguese duck, "your mode of expressing yourself is not very polite. I must call your attention to that fact."

"It was sunshine here yesterday," said the little bird, "but to-day it is cloudy and the air is close."

"You know very little about the weather, I fancy," she retorted, "the day is not over yet. Don't stand there, looking so stupid."

"But you are looking at me just as the wicked eyes looked when I fell into the yard yesterday."

"Impertinent creature!" exclaimed the Portuguese duck: "would you compare me with the cat—that beast of prey? There's not a drop of malicious blood in me. I've taken your part, and now I'll teach you better manners." So saying, she made a bite at the little singing-bird's head, and he fell dead on the ground. "Now whatever is the meaning of this?" she said; "could he not bear even such a little peck as I gave him? Then certainly he was not made for this world. I've been like a mother to him, I know that, for I've a good heart."

Then the cock from the neighbouring yard stuck his head in, and crowed with steam-engine power.

"You'll kill me with your crowing," she cried; "it's all your fault. He's lost his life, and I'm very near losing mine."

"There's not much of him lying there," observed the cock.

"Speak of him with respect," said the Portuguese duck, "for he had manners and education, and he could sing. He was affectionate and gentle, and that is as rare a quality in animals as in those who call themselves human beings."

Then all the ducks came crowding round the little dead bird. Ducks have strong passions, whether they feel envy or pity.

There was nothing to envy here, so they all showed a great deal of pity, even the two Chinese. "We shall never have another singing-bird again amongst us; he was almost a Chinese," they whispered, and then they wept with such a noisy, clucking sound, that all the other fowls clucked too, but the ducks went about with redder eyes afterwards. "We have hearts of our own," they said, "nobody can deny that."

"Hearts!" repeated the Portuguese, "indeed you have, almost as tender as the ducks in Portugal."

"Let us think of getting something to satisfy our hunger," said the drake, "that's the most important business. If one of our toys is broken, why we have plenty more."

The Snow Man.

"It is so delightfully cold," said the Snow Man, "that it makes my whole body crackle. This is just the kind of wind to blow life into one. How that great red thing up there is staring at me!" He meant the sun, who was just setting. "It shall not make me wink. I shall manage to keep the pieces."

He had two triangular pieces of tile in his head, instead of eyes; his mouth was made of an old broken rake, and was, of course, furnished with teeth. He had been brought into existence amid the joyous shouts of boys, the jingling of sledge-bells, and the slashing of whips. The sun went down, and the full moon rose, large, round, and clear, shining in the deep blue.

"There it comes again, from the other side," said the Snow Man, who supposed the sun was showing himself once more. "Ah, I have cured him of staring, though; now he may hang up there, and shine, that I may see myself. If I only knew how to manage to move away from this place,—I should so like to move. If I could, I would slide along yonder on the ice, as I have seen the boys do; but I don't understand how; I don't even know how to run."

"Away, away," barked the old yard-dog. He was quite hoarse, and could not pronounce "Bow wow" properly. He had once been an indoor dog, and lay by the fire, and he had been hoarse ever since. "The sun will make you run some day. I saw him, last winter, make your predecessor run, and his predecessor before him. Away, away, they all have to go."

"I don't understand you, comrade," said the Snow Man. "Is that thing up yonder to teach me to run? I saw it running itself a little while ago, and now it has come creeping up from the other side."

"You know nothing at all," replied the yard-dog; "but then, you've only lately been patched up. What you see yonder is the moon, and the one before it was the sun. It will come again to-morrow, and most likely teach you to run down into the ditch by the well; for I think the weather is going to change. I can feel such pricks and stabs in my left leg; I am sure there is going to be a change."

"I don't understand him," said the Snow Man to himself; "but I have a feeling that he is talking of something very disagreeable. The one who stared so just now, and whom he calls the sun, is not my friend; I can feel that too."

"Away, away," barked the yard-dog, and then he turned round three times, and crept into his kennel to sleep.

There was really a change in the weather. Towards morning, a thick fog covered the whole country round, and a keen wind arose, so that the cold seemed to freeze one's bones; but when the sun rose, the sight was splendid. Trees and bushes were covered with hoar frost, and looked like a forest of white coral; while on every twig glittered frozen dew-drops. The many delicate forms concealed in summer by luxuriant foliage, were now clearly defined, and looked like glittering lace-work. From every twig glistened a white radiance. The birch, waving in the wind, looked full of life, like trees in summer; and its appearance was wondrously beautiful. And where the sun shone, how everything glittered and sparkled, as if diamond dust had been strewn about; while the snowy carpet of the earth appeared as if covered with diamonds,

from which countless lights gleamed, whiter than even the snow itself.

"This is really beautiful," said a young girl, who had come into the garden with a young man; and they both stood still near the Snow Man, and contemplated the glittering scene. "Summer cannot show a more beautiful sight," she exclaimed, while her eyes sparkled.

"And we can't have such a fellow as this in the summer-time," replied the young man, pointing to the Snow Man; "he is capital."

The girl laughed, and nodded at the Snow Man, and then tripped away over the snow with her friend. The snow creaked and crackled beneath her feet, as if she had been treading on starch.

"Who are these two?" asked the Snow Man of the yard-dog. "You have been here longer than I have; do you know them?"

"Of course I know them," replied the yard-dog; "she has stroked my back many times, and he has given me a bone of meat. I never bite those two."

"But what are they?" asked the Snow Man.

"They are lovers," he replied; "they will go and live in the same kennel by-and-by, and gnaw at the same bone. Away, away!"

"Are they the same kind of beings as you and I?" asked the Snow Man.

"Well, they belong to the same master," retorted the yard-dog. "Certainly people who were only born yesterday know very little. I can see that in you. I have age and experience. I know every one here in the house, and I know there was once a time when I did not lie out here in the cold, fastened to a chain. Away, away!"

"The cold is delightful," said the Snow Man; "but do tell me; only you must not clank your chain so; for it jars all through me when you do that."

"Away, away!" barked the yard-dog; "I will tell you: they said I was a pretty little fellow once; then I used to lie

in a velvet-covered chair, up at the master's house, and sit in the mistress's lap. They used to kiss my nose, and wipe my paws with an embroidered handkerchief, and I was called 'Ami, dear Ami, sweet Ami.' But after a while I grew too big for them, and they sent me away to the housekeeper's room; so I came to live on the lower storey. You can look into the room from where you stand, and see where I was master once; for I was indeed master to the housekeeper. It was certainly a smaller room than those upstairs; but I was more comfortable; for I was not being continually taken hold of and pulled about by the children, as I had been. I received quite as good food, or even better. I had my own cushion, and there was a stove—it is the finest thing in the world at this season of the year. I used to go under the stove, and lie down quite beneath it. Ah, I still dream of that stove. Away, away!"

"Does a stove look beautiful?" asked the Snow Man; "is it at all like me?"

"It is just the reverse of you," said the dog; "it's as black as a crow, and has a long neck and a brass knob; it eats firewood, so that fire spurts out of its mouth. We should keep on one side, or under it, to be comfortable. You can see it through the window, from where you stand."

Then the Snow Man looked, and saw a bright polished thing with a brazen knob, and fire gleaming from the lower part of it. The Snow Man felt quite a strange sensation come over him; it was very odd, he knew not what it meant, and he could not account for it. But there are people who are not men of snow, who understand what it is. "And why did you leave her?" asked the Snow Man, for it seemed to him that the stove must be of the female sex. "How could you give up such a comfortable place?"

"I was obliged," replied the yard-dog. "They turned me out of doors, and chained me up here. I had bitten the youngest of my master's sons in the leg, because he kicked away the bone I was gnawing. 'Bone for bone,' I thought; but they were so angry, and from that time I have been fastened to a chain, and lost my bone. Don't you hear how hoarse I am. Away, away!

I can't talk any more like other dogs. Away, away, that is the end of it all."

But the Snow Man was no longer listening. He was looking into the housekeeper's room on the lower storey, where the stove stood on its four iron legs, looking about the same size as the Snow Man himself. "What a strange crackling I feel within me,"



"'DOES A STOVE LOOK BEAUTIFUL,' ASKED THE SNOW MAN."—*p.* 183.

he said. "Shall I ever get in there? It is an innocent wish, and innocent wishes are sure to be fulfilled. I must go in there and lean against her, even if I have to break the window."

"You must never go in there," said the yard-dog; "for if you approach the stove, you'll melt away, away."

"I might as well go," said the Snow Man, "for I think I am breaking up as it is."

During the whole day the Snow Man stood looking in through the window, and in the twilight hour the room became still more inviting, for from the stove came a gentle glow, not like the sun or the moon ; no, only the bright light which gleams from a stove when it has been well fed. When the door of the stove was opened, the flames darted out of its mouth ; this is customary with all stoves. The light of the flame fell directly on the face and breast of the Snow Man with a ruddy gleam. "I can endure it no longer," said he ; "how beautiful it looks when it stretches out its tongue ! "

The night was long, but it did not appear so to the Snow Man, who stood there enjoying his own reflections, and crackling with the cold. In the morning, the window-panes of the housekeeper's room were covered with ice. They were the most beautiful ice-flowers any Snow Man could desire, but they concealed the stove. These window-panes would not thaw, and he could see nothing of the stove, which he pictured to himself, as if it had been a lovely human being. The snow crackled and the wind whistled around him ; it was just the kind of frosty weather a Snow Man might thoroughly enjoy. But he did not enjoy it ; how, indeed, could he enjoy anything when he was "stove sick ? "

"That is a terrible disease for a Snow Man," said the yard-dog ; "I have suffered from it myself, but I got over it. Away, away," he barked, and then he added, "the weather is going to change." And the weather did change ; it began to thaw. As the warmth increased, the Snow Man decreased. He said nothing, and made no complaint, which is a sure sign. One morning he broke, and sunk down altogether ; and, behold, where he had stood, something like a broomstick remained sticking up in the ground. It was the pole round which the boys had built him up. "Ah, now I understand why he had such a great longing for the stove," said the yard-dog. "Why, there's the shovel that is used for cleaning out the stove, fastened to the pole." The Snow Man had a stove scraper in his body ; that was what moved him so. "But it's all over now. Away, away." And soon the winter

passed. "Away, away," barked the hoarse yard-dog. But the girls in the house sang,

> "Come from your fragrant home, green thyme;
> Stretch your soft branches, willow-tree;
> The months are bringing the sweet spring-time,
> When the lark in the sky sings joyfully.
> Come, gentle sun, while the cuckoo sings,
> And I'll mock his note in my wanderings."

And nobody thought any more of the Snow Man.



The Farm-yard Cock and the Weather-cock.

THERE were once two cocks, one of them stood on a dunghill, the other on the roof. Both were conceited, but the question is, which of the two was the more useful? A wooden partition divided the poultry-yard from another yard, in which lay a heap of manure sheltering a cucumber bed. In this bed grew a large cucumber, which was fully conscious of being a plant that required to be reared in a hotbed. "It is the privilege of birth," said the cucumber to herself; "all cannot be born cucumbers,

there must be other kinds as well. The fowls, the ducks, and the cattle in the next yard are all different creatures, and there is the yard-cock, I can look up to him when he is on the wooden partition. He is certainly of much greater importance than the weather-cock, who is so highly placed, and who can't even creak, much less crow; and besides, he has neither hens nor chickens, and thinks only of himself, and perspires verdigris. But the yard-cock is something like a cock. His gait is like a dance, and his crowing is music, and wherever he goes it is known instantly. What a trumpeter he is! If he would only come in here, even if he were to eat me up, stalk and all, it would be a pleasant death;" so said the cucumber.

During the night the weather became very bad; hens, chickens, and even the cock himself sought shelter. The wind blew down the partition between the two yards with a crash; the tiles came tumbling from the roof, but the weather-cock stood firm. He did not even turn round; in fact, he could not, although he was fresh and newly cast. He had been born full-grown, and did not at all resemble the birds that fly beneath the vault of heaven, such as the sparrows and swallows. He despised them, and looked upon them as little twittering birds of small size, who were only made to sing. The pigeons he owned were large, and shone in the sun like mother-of-pearl. They had some resemblance to weather-cocks, but then they were fat and stupid, and all they thought of was to stuff themselves with food. "Besides," said the weather-cock, "they are very tiresome things to converse with."

The birds of passage often paid a visit to the weather-cock, and told him tales of foreign lands, of large companies passing through the air, and exciting stories of encounters with robbers and birds of prey. These were very interesting when heard for the first time, but the weather-cock knew they always repeated themselves, which made it tedious to listen. "They are tedious, and so is every one else; there is no one fit to associate with. One and all of them are wearisome and stupid. The whole world is worth nothing—it is made up of stupidity."

The weather-cock was what is called "stuck-up," and that

quality alone would have made him interesting in the eyes of the cucumber had she known it, but she had only eyes for the yard-cock, who had actually made his appearance in her own yard; for the violence of the storm had passed, but the wind had blown down the wooden palings.

"What do you think of that for crowing?" asked the yard-cock of his hens and chickens. It was rather rough, and wanted elegance, but they did not say so, as they stepped upon the dung-hill, while the cock strutted about amongst them as if he had been a knight. "Garden plant," he cried to the cucumber, and she heard the words with deep feeling: they showed that he understood who she was, and she forgot that he was pecking at her, and eating her up—a happy death! Then the hens came running up, and the chickens followed, for where one runs the rest run also; and they clucked and chirped, and looked at the cock, and were proud that they belonged to him. "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" crowed he, "the chickens in the poultry-yard will grow large fowls if I make my voice heard in the world." And the hens and chickens clucked and chirped, and the cock told them a great piece of news. "A cock can lay an egg," he said; "and what do you think is in that egg? In that egg lies a basilisk. No one can endure the sight of a basilisk. Men know my power, and now you know what I am capable of also, and what a renowned bird I am." And with this the yard-cock flapped his wings, and erected his comb, and crowed again, till they all trembled, even the hens and chickens; but they were proud that one of their race should be of such renown in the world. They clucked and they chirped so that the weather-cock heard it: he had heard it all, but never stirred. "It's all stupid stuff," said a voice within the weather-cock, "the yard-cock does not lay eggs any more than I do, and I am too lazy. I could lay a wind egg if I liked, but the world is not worth a wind egg. And now I don't intend to sit here any longer." And with that the weather-cock broke off and fell into the yard. He did not kill the yard-cock, although the hens said he intended to do so. And what does the moral say,—"Better to crow than to be '*stuck-up*' and break down at last."

The Butterfly.

THERE was once a butterfly who wished for a bride; and, as may be supposed, he wanted to choose a very pretty one from among the flowers. He glanced, with a very critical eye, at all the flower-beds, and found that the flowers were seated quietly and demurely on their stalks, just as maidens should sit before they are engaged; but there was a great number of them, and it appeared as if his search would become very wearisome. The butterfly did not like to take too much trouble, so he flew off on a visit to the daisies. The French call this flower "Marguerite," and they say that the little daisy can prophesy. Lovers pluck off the leaves, and as they pluck each leaf, they ask a question about their lovers; thus: "Does he or she love me?—Ardently? Distractedly? Very much? A little? Not at all?" and so on. Every one speaks these words in his own language. The butterfly came also to Marguerite to inquire, but he did not pluck off her leaves; he pressed a kiss on each of them, for he thought there was always more to be done by kindness.

"Darling Marguerite daisy," he said to her, "you are the wisest woman of all the flowers. Pray tell me which of the flowers I shall choose for my wife. Which will be my bride? When I know, I will fly directly to her, and propose."

But Marguerite did not answer him; she was offended that he should call her a woman when she was only a girl; and there is a great difference. He asked her a second time, and then a third; but she remained dumb, and answered not a word. Then he would wait no longer, but flew away, to commence his wooing at once. It was in the early spring, when the crocus and the snowdrop were in full bloom.

"They are very pretty," thought the butterfly; "charming little lasses; but they are rather formal."

Then, as young lads often do, he looked out for the elder girls. He next flew to the anemones; but these were rather sour to his taste. The violet, a little too sentimental. The lime-blossoms, too small; and besides, there was such a large family of them. The

apple-blossoms, though they looked like roses, bloomed to-day, but might fall off to-morrow, with the first wind that blew; and he thought that a marriage with one of them might last too short a time. The pea-blossom pleased him most of all; she was white and red, graceful and slender, and belonged to those domestic maidens who have a pretty appearance, and can yet be useful in the kitchen. He was just about to make her an offer, when, close by the maiden, he saw a pod, with a withered flower hanging at the end.

"Who is that?" he asked.

"That is my sister," replied the pea-blossom.

"Oh, indeed; and you will be like her some day," said he; and he flew away directly, for he felt quite shocked.

A honeysuckle hung forth from the hedge, in full bloom; but there were so many girls like her, with long faces and sallow complexions. No; he did not like her. But which one did he like?

Spring went by, and summer drew towards its close; autumn came; but he had not decided. The flowers now appeared in their most gorgeous robes, but all in vain; they had not the fresh, fragrant air of youth. For the heart asks for fragrance, even when it is no longer young; and there is very little of that to be found in the dahlias or the dry chrysanthemums; therefore the butterfly turned to the mint on the ground. You know, this plant has no blossom; but it is sweetness all over,—full of fragrance from head to foot, with the scent of a flower in every leaf.

"I will take her," said the butterfly; and he made her an offer. But the mint stood silent and stiff, as she listened to him. At last she said,—

"Friendship, if you please; nothing more. I am old, and you are old, but we may live for each other just the same; as to marrying—no; don't let us appear ridiculous at our age."

And so it happened that the butterfly got no wife at all. He had been too long choosing, which is always a bad plan. And the butterfly became what is called an old bachelor.

It was late in the autumn, with rainy and cloudy weather. The cold wind blew over the bowed backs of the willows, so that they

creaked again. It was not the weather for flying about in summer clothes; but fortunately the butterfly was not out in it. He had got a shelter by chance. It was in a room heated by a stove, and as warm as summer. He could exist here, he said, well enough.

"But it is not enough merely to exist," said he; "I need freedom, sunshine, and a little flower for a companion."

Then he flew against the window-pane, and was seen and admired by those in the room, who caught him, and stuck him on a pin, in a box of curiosities. They could not do more for him.

"Now I am perched on a stalk, like the flowers," said the butterfly. "It is not very pleasant, certainly; I should imagine it is something like being married; for here I am stuck fast." And with this thought he consoled himself a little.

"That seems very poor consolation," said one of the plants in the room, that grew in a pot.

"Ah," thought the butterfly, "one can't very well trust these plants in pots; they have had too much to do with mankind."

Soup from a Sausage Skewer.

"We had such an excellent dinner yesterday," said an old mouse of the female sex to another who had not been present at the feast. "I sat number twenty-one below the mouse-king, which was not a bad place. Shall I tell you what we had? Everything was first-rate. Mouldy bread, tallow candle, and sausage. And then, when we had finished that course, the same came on all over again: it was as good as two feasts. We were very sociable, and there was as much joking and fun as if we had been all of one family circle. Nothing was left but the sausage skewers, and this formed a subject of conversation, till at last it turned to the proverb, 'Soup from sausage skins;' or, as the people in the neighbouring country call it, 'Soup from a sausage skewer.' Every one had heard the proverb, but no one had ever tasted the soup,

much less prepared it. A capital toast was drunk to the inventor of the soup, and some one said he ought to be made a relieving officer to the poor. Was not that witty? Then the old mouse-king rose and promised that the young lady-mouse who should learn how best to prepare this much-admired and savoury soup should be his queen, and a year and a day should be allowed for the purpose."

"That was not at all a bad proposal," said the other mouse; "but how is the soup made?"

"Ah, that is more than I can tell you. All the young lady-mice were asking the same question. They wished very much to be queen, but they did not want to take the trouble of going out into the world to learn how to make soup, which was absolutely necessary to be done first. But it is not every one who would care to leave her family, or her happy corner by the fire-side at home, even to be made queen. It is not always easy to find bacon and cheese-rind in foreign lands every day, and it is not pleasant to have to endure hunger, and be perhaps, after all, eaten up alive by the cat."

Most probably some such thoughts as these discouraged the majority from going out into the world to collect the required information. Only four mice gave notice that they were ready to set out on the journey. They were young and lively, but poor. Each of them wished to visit one of the four divisions of the world, so that it might be seen which was the most favoured by fortune. Every one took a sausage skewer as a traveller's staff, and to remind them of the object of their journey. They left home early in May, and none of them returned till the first of May in the following year, and then only three of them. Nothing was seen or heard of the fourth, although the day of decision was close at hand. "Ah, yes, there is always some trouble mixed up with the greatest pleasure," said the mouse-king; but he gave orders that all the mice within a circle of many miles should be invited at once. They were to assemble in the kitchen, and the three travelled mice were to stand in a row before them, while a sausage skewer, covered with crape, was to be stuck up instead of

the missing mouse. No one dared to express an opinion until the king spoke, and desired one of them to go on with her story. And now we shall hear what she said.

What the First Little Mouse saw and heard on her Travels.

"When I first went out into the world," said the little mouse, "I fancied, as so many of my age do, that I already knew everything, but it was not so. It takes years to acquire great knowledge. I went at once to sea in a ship bound for the north.



"THEY WERE TO ASSEMBLE IN THE KITCHEN."—*p.* 192.

I had been told that the ship's cook must know how to prepare every dish at sea, and it is easy enough to do that with plenty of sides of bacon, and large tubs of salt meat and mouldy flour. There I found plenty of delicate food, but no opportunity for learning how to make soup from a sausage skewer. We sailed on for many days and nights; the ship rocked fearfully, and we did not escape without a wetting. As soon as we arrived at the port to which the ship was bound, I left it, and went on shore at a place far towards the north. It is a wonderful thing to leave your own little corner at home, to hide yourself in a ship where there

are sure to be some nice snug corners for shelter, then suddenly to find yourself thousands of miles away in a foreign land. I saw large pathless forests of pine and birch-trees, which smelt so strong that I sneezed and thought of sausage. There were great lakes also which looked as black as ink at a distance, but were quite clear when I came close to them. Large swans were floating upon them, and I thought at first they were only foam, they lay so still; but when I saw them walk and fly, I knew what they were directly. They belong to the goose species, one can see that by their walk. No one can attempt to disguise family descent. I kept with my own kind, and associated with the forest and field mice, who, however, knew very little, especially about what I wanted to know, and which had actually made me travel abroad. The idea that soup could be made from a sausage skewer was to them such an out-of-the-way, unlikely thought, that it was repeated from one to another through the whole forest. They declared that the problem would never be solved, that the thing was an impossibility. How little I thought that in this place, on the very first night, I should be initiated into the manner of its preparation.

"It was the height of summer, which the mice told me was the reason that the forest smelt so strong, and that the herbs were so fragrant, and the lakes with the white swimming swans so dark, and yet so clear. On the margin of the wood, near to three or four houses, a pole, as large as the mainmast of a ship, had been erected, and from the summit hung wreaths of flowers and fluttering ribbons; it was the Maypole. Lads and lasses danced round the pole, and tried to out-do the violins of the musicians with their singing. They were as merry as ever at sunset and in the moonlight, but I took no part in the merry-making. What has a little mouse to do with a May-pole dance? I sat in the soft moss, and held my sausage skewer tight. The moon threw its beams particularly on one spot where stood a tree covered with exceedingly fine moss. I may almost venture to say that it was as fine and soft as the fur of the mouse-king, but it was green, which is a colour very agreeable to the eye. All at

once I saw the most charming little people marching towards me. They did not reach higher than my knee; they looked like human beings, but were better proportioned, and they called themselves elves. Their clothes were very delicate and fine, for they were made of the leaves of flowers, trimmed with the wings of flies and gnats, which had not a bad effect. By their manner, it appeared as if they were seeking for something. I knew not what, till at last one of them espied me and came towards me, and the foremost pointed to my sausage skewer, and said, 'There, that is just what we want; see, it is pointed at the top; is it not capital?' and the longer he looked at my pilgrim's staff, the more delighted he became. 'I will lend it you,' said I, 'but not to keep.'

"'Oh no, we won't keep it!' they all cried; and then they seized the skewer, which I gave up to them, and danced with it to the spot where the delicate moss grew, and set it up in the middle of the green. They wanted a Maypole, and the one they now had seemed cut out on purpose for them. Then they decorated it so beautifully that it was quite dazzling to look at. Little spiders spun golden threads around it, and then it was hung with fluttering veils and flags so delicately white that they glittered like snow in the moonshine. After that they took colours from the butterfly's wing, and sprinkled them over the white drapery which gleamed as if covered with flowers and diamonds, so that I could not recognise my sausage skewer at all. Such a Maypole has never been seen in all the world as this. Then came a great company of real elves. Nothing could be finer than their clothes, and they invited me to be present at the feast; but I was to keep at a certain distance, because I was too large for them. Then commenced such music that it sounded like a thousand glass bells, and was so full and strong that I thought it must be the song of the swans. I fancied also that I heard the voices of the cuckoo and the blackbird, and it seemed at last as if the whole forest sent forth glorious melodies—the voices of children, the tinkling of bells, and the songs of the birds; and all this wonderful melody came from the elfin maypole. My sausage peg was a complete peal of bells. I could scarcely believe that so much could have

been produced from it, till I remembered into what hands it had fallen. I was so much affected that I wept tears such as a little mouse can weep, but they were tears of joy. The night was far too short for me; there are no long nights there in summer, as we often have in this part of the world. When the morning dawned, and the gentle breeze rippled the glassy mirror of the forest lake, all the delicate veils and flags fluttered away into thin air: the waving garlands of the spider's web, the hanging bridges and galleries, or whatever else they may be called, vanished away as if they had never been. Six elves brought me back my sausage skewer, and at the same time asked me to make any request, which they would grant if in their power: so I begged them, if they could, to tell me how to make soup from a sausage skewer.

"'How do we make it?' said the chief of the elves with a smile. 'Why you have just seen it; you scarcely knew your sausage skewer again, I am sure.'

"They think themselves very wise, thought I to myself. Then I told them all about it, and why I had travelled so far, and also what promise had been made at home to the one who should discover the method of preparing this soup. 'What use will it be,' I asked, 'to the mouse-king or to our whole mighty kingdom that I have seen all these beautiful things? I cannot shake the sausage peg and say, Look, here is the skewer, and now the soup will come. That would only produce a dish to be served when people were keeping a fast.'

"Then the elf dipped his finger into the cup of a violet, and said to me, 'Look here, I will anoint your pilgrim's staff, so that when you return to your own home and enter the king's castle, you have only to touch the king with your staff, and violets will spring forth and cover the whole of it, even in the coldest winter time: so I think I have given you really something to carry home, and a little more than something.'"

But before the little mouse explained what this something more was, she stretched her staff out to the king, and as it touched him the most beautiful bunch of violets sprang forth and filled the place with their perfume. The smell was so powerful that

the mouse-king ordered the mice who stood nearest the chimney to thrust their tails into the fire, that there might be a smell of burning, for the perfume of the violets was overpowering, and not the sort of scent that every one liked.

"But what about the something more of which you spoke just now?" asked the mouse-king.

"Why," answered the little mouse, "I think it is what they call 'effect;'" and thereupon she turned the staff round, and behold not a single flower was to be seen upon it! She now only held the naked skewer, and lifted it up as a conductor lifts his baton at a concert. "Violets, the elf told me," continued the mouse, "are for the sight, the smell, and the touch; so we have only now to produce the effect of hearing and tasting;" and then, as the little mouse beat time with her staff, there came sounds of music, not such music as was heard in the forest, at the elfin feast, but such as is often heard in the kitchen—the sounds of boiling and roasting. It came quite suddenly, like wind rushing through the chimneys, and seemed as if every pot and kettle were boiling over. The fire-shovel clattered down on the brass fender; and then, quite as suddenly, all was still,—nothing could be heard but the light, vapoury song of the tea-kettle, which was quite wonderful to hear, for no one could rightly distinguish whether the kettle was just beginning to boil or going to stop. And the little pot steamed, and the great pot simmered, but without any regard for each; indeed there seemed no sense in the pots at all. And as the little mouse waved her baton still more wildly, the pots foamed and threw up bubbles, and boiled over; while again the wind roared and whistled through the chimney, and at last there was such a terrible hubbub, that the little mouse let her stick fall.

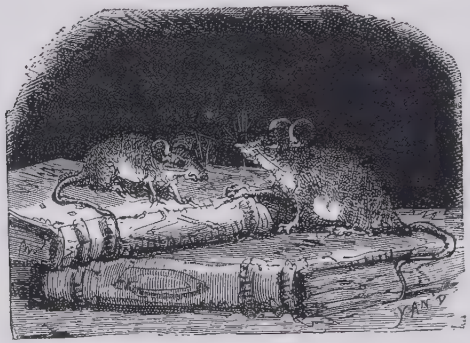
"That is a strange sort of soup," said the mouse-king; "shall we not now hear about the preparation?"

"That is all," answered the little mouse, with a bow.

"That all!" said the mouse-king; "then we shall be glad to hear what information the next may have to give us."

What the Second Mouse had to tell.

"I was born in the library, at a castle," said the second mouse. "Very few members of our family ever had the good fortune to get into the dining-room, much less the store-room. On my journey, and here to-day, are the only times I have ever seen a kitchen. We were often obliged to suffer hunger in the library, but then we gained a great deal of knowledge. The rumour reached us of the royal prize offered to those who should be able



"WE WERE OFTEN OBLIGED TO SUFFER HUNGER IN THE LIBRARY."

to make soup from a sausage skewer. Then my old grandmother sought out a manuscript which, however, she could not read, but had heard it read, and in it was written, 'Those who are poets can make soup of sausage skewers.' She then asked me if I was a poet. I felt myself quite innocent of any such pretensions. Then she said I must go out and make myself a poet. I asked again what I should be required to do, for it seemed to me quite as difficult as to find out how to make soup of a sausage skewer. My grandmother had heard a great deal of reading in her day, and she told me three principal qualifications were necessary—understanding, imagination, and feeling. 'If you can manage to acquire these three, you will be a poet, and the sausage-skewer soup will be quite easy to you.'

"So I went forth into the world, and turned my steps towards the west, that I might become a poet. Understanding is the most important matter in everything. I knew that, for the other two qualifications are not thought much of; so I went first to seek for understanding. Where was I to find it? 'Go to the ant and learn wisdom,' said the great Jewish king. I knew that from living in a library. So I went straight on till I came to the first great ant-hill, and then I set myself to watch, that I might become wise. The ants are a very respectable people, they are wisdom itself. All they do is like the working of a sum in arithmetic, which comes right. 'To work and to lay eggs,' say they, 'and to provide for posterity, is to live out your time properly;' and that they truly do. They are divided into the clean and the dirty ants, their rank is pointed out by a number, and the ant-queen is number ONE; and her opinion is the only correct one on everything; she seems to have the whole wisdom of the world in her, which was just the important matter I wished to acquire. She said a great deal which was no doubt very clever; yet to me it sounded like nonsense. She said the ant-hill was the loftiest thing in the world, and yet close to the mound stood a tall tree, which no one could deny was loftier, much loftier, but no mention was made of the tree. One evening an ant lost herself on this tree; she had crept up the stem, not nearly to the top, but higher than any ant had ever ventured; and when at last she returned home she said that she had found something in her travels much higher than the ant-hill. The rest of the ants considered this an insult to the whole community; so she was condemned to wear a muzzle and to live in perpetual solitude. A short time afterwards another ant got on the tree, and made the same journey and the same discovery, but she spoke of it cautiously and indefinitely, and as she was one of the superior ants and very much respected, they believed her, and when she died they erected an eggshell as a monument to her memory, for they cultivated a great respect for science. 'I saw," said the little mouse, "that the ants were always running to and fro with their burdens on their backs. Once I saw one of them drop her load; she gave herself a great deal of

trouble in trying to raise it again, but she could not succeed. Then two others came up and tried with all their strength to help her, till they nearly dropped their own burdens in doing so; then they were obliged to stop for a moment in their help, for every one must think of himself first. And the ant-queen remarked that their conduct that day showed that they possessed kind hearts and good understanding. 'These two qualities,' she continued, 'place us ants in the highest degree above all other reasonable beings. Understanding must therefore be seen among us in the most prominent manner, and my wisdom is greater than all.' And so saying she raised herself on her two hind legs, that no one else might be mistaken for her. I could not therefore make an error, so I ate her up. We are to go to the ants to learn wisdom, and I had got the queen.

"I now turned and went nearer to the lofty tree already mentioned, which was an oak. It had a tall trunk with a wide-spreading top, and was very old. I knew that a living being dwelt here, a dryad as she is called, who is born with the tree and dies with it. I had heard this in the library, and here was just such a tree, and in it an oak-maiden. She uttered a terrible scream when she caught sight of me so near to her; like many women, she was very much afraid of mice. And she had more real cause for fear than they have, for I might have gnawed through the tree on which her life depended. I spoke to her in a kind and friendly manner, and begged her to take courage. At last she took me up in her delicate hand, and then I told her what had brought me out into the world; and she promised me that perhaps on that very evening she should be able to obtain for me one of the two treasures for which I was seeking. She told me that Phantæsus was her very dear friend, that he was as beautiful as the god of love, that he remained often for many hours with her under the leafy boughs of the tree which then rustled and waved more than ever over them both. He called her his dryad, she said, and the tree his tree; for the grand old oak, with its gnarled trunk, was just to his taste. The root, spreading deep into the earth, the top rising high in the fresh air, knew the value of the drifted snow,

the keen wind, and the warm sunshine, as it ought to be known. 'Yes,' continued the dryad, 'the birds sing up above in the branches, and talk to each other about the beautiful fields they have visited in foreign lands; and on one of the withered boughs a stork has built his nest,—it is beautifully arranged, and besides it is pleasant to hear a little about the land of the pyramids. All this pleases Phantæsus, but it is not enough for him; I am obliged to relate to him of my life in the woods, and go back to my childhood, when I was little, and the tree so small and delicate, that a stinging-nettle could overshadow it, and I have to tell everything that has happened since then till now that the tree is so large and strong. Sit you down now under the green bind-wood and pay attention; when Phantæsus comes I will find an opportunity to lay hold of his wing and to pull out one of the little feathers. That feather you shall have; a better was never given to any poet, it will be quite enough for you.

"And when Phantæsus came the feather was plucked, and," said the little mouse, "I seized and put it in water, and kept it there till it was quite soft. It was very heavy and indigestible, but I managed to nibble it up at last. It is not so easy to nibble one's self into a poet, there are so many things to get through. Now, however, I had two of them, understanding and imagination; and through these I knew that the third was to be found in the library. A great man has said and written that there are novels whose sole and only use appeared to be that they might relieve mankind of overflowing tears—a kind of sponge, in fact, for sucking up feelings and emotions. I remembered a few of these books, they had always appeared tempting to the appetite; they had been much read, and were so greasy, that they must have absorbed no end of emotions in themselves. I retraced my steps to the library, and literally devoured a whole novel, that is, properly speaking, the interior or soft part of it; the crust, or binding, I left. When I had digested not only this, but a second, I felt a stirring within me; then I ate a small piece of a third romance, and felt myself a poet. I said it to myself, and told others the same. I had head-ache and back-ache, and I cannot

tell what aches besides. I thought over all the stories that may be said to be connected with sausage pegs, and all that has ever been written about skewers, and sticks, and staves, and splinters came to my thoughts : the ant-queen must have had a wonderfully clear understanding. I remembered the man who placed a white stick in his mouth by which he could make himself and the stick invisible. I thought of sticks as hobby-horses, staves of music or rhyme, of breaking a stick over a man's back, and Heaven knows how many more phrases of the same sort relating to sticks, staves, and skewers. All my thoughts ran on skewers, sticks of wood, and staves ; and as I am, at last, a poet, and I have worked terribly hard to make myself one, I can of course make poetry on anything. I shall therefore be able to wait upon you every day in the week with a poetical history of a skewer. And that is my soup."

"In that case," said the mouse-king, "we will hear what the third mouse has to say."

"Squeak, squeak," cried a little mouse at the kitchen door ; it was the fourth, and not the third, of the four who were contending for the prize, one whom the rest supposed to be dead. She shot in like an arrow, and overturned the sausage peg that had been covered with crape. She had been running day and night. She had watched an opportunity to get into a goods train, and had travelled by the railway ; and yet she had arrived almost too late. She pressed forward, looking very much ruffled. She had lost her sausage skewer, but not her voice ; for she began to speak at once as if they only waited for her, and would hear her only, and as if nothing else in the world was of the least consequence. She spoke out so clearly and plainly, and she had come in so suddenly, that no one had time to stop her or to say a word while she was speaking. And now let us hear what she said.

What the Fourth Mouse, who spoke before the Third, had to tell.

"I started off at once to the largest town," said she ; "but the name of it has escaped me. I have a very bad memory for names. I was carried from the railway, with some forfeited

goods, to the gaol, and on arriving I made my escape, and ran into the house of the turnkey. The turnkey was speaking of his prisoners, especially of one who had uttered thoughtless words. These words had given rise to other words, and at length they were written down and registered: 'The whole affair is like making soup of sausage skewers,' said he, 'but the soup may cost him his neck.'

"Now this raised in me an interest for the prisoner," continued the little mouse, "and I watched my opportunity, and slipped into his apartment, for there is a mouse-hole to be found behind every closed door. The prisoner looked pale; he had a great beard and large, sparkling eyes. There was a lamp burning, but the walls were so black that they only looked the blacker for it. The prisoner scratched pictures and verses with white chalk on the black walls, but I did not read the verses. I think he found his confinement wearisome, so that I was a welcome guest. He enticed me with bread-crumbs, with whistling, and with gentle words, and seemed so friendly towards me, that by degrees I gained confidence in him, and we became friends; he divided his bread and water with me, gave me cheese and sausage, and I really began to love him. Altogether, I must own that it was a very pleasant intimacy. He let me run about on his hand, on his arm, and into his sleeve; and I even crept into his beard, and he called me his little friend. I forgot what I had come out into the world for; forgot my sausage skewer, which I had laid in a crack in the floor—it



"I WAS A WELCOME GUEST."

is lying there still. I wished to stay with him always where I was, for I knew that if I went away the poor prisoner would have no one to be his friend, which is a sad thing. I stayed, but he did not. He spoke to me so mournfully for the last time, gave me double as much bread and cheese as usual, and kissed his hand to me. Then he went away, and never came back. I know nothing more of his history.

"The gaoler took possession of me now. He said something about soup from a sausage skewer, but I could not trust him. He took me in his hand certainly, but it was to place me in a cage like a tread-mill. Oh how dreadful it was! I had to run round and round without getting any farther in advance, and only to make everybody laugh. The gaoler's grand-daughter was a charming little thing. She had curly hair like the brightest gold, merry eyes, and such a smiling mouth.

"'You poor little mouse,' said she, one day as she peeped into my cage, 'I will set you free.' She then drew forth the iron fastening, and I sprang out on the window-sill, and from thence to the roof. Free! free! that was all I could think of; not of the object of my journey. It grew dark, and as night was coming on I found a lodging in an old tower, where dwelt a watchman and an owl. I had no confidence in either of them, least of all in the owl, which is like a cat, and has a great failing, for she eats mice. One may however be mistaken sometimes; and so was I, for this was a respectable and well-educated old owl, who knew more than the watchman, and even as much as I did myself. The young owls made a great fuss about everything, but the only rough words she would say to them were, 'You had better go and make some soup from sausage skewers.' She was very indulgent and loving to her own children. Her conduct gave me such confidence in her, that from a crack where I sat I called out 'squeak.' This confidence of mine pleased her so much that she assured me she would take me under her own protection, and that not a creature should do me harm. The fact was, she wickedly meant to keep me in reserve for her own eating in the winter, when food would be scarce. Yet she was a very clever lady-owl;

she explained to me that the watchman could only hoot with the horn that hung loose at his side; and then she said he is so terribly proud of it, that he imagines himself an owl in the tower; —wants to do great things, but only succeeds in small;—all soup on a sausage skewer. Then I begged the owl to give me the recipe for this soup. 'Soup from a sausage skewer,' said she, 'is only a proverb amongst mankind, and may be understood in many ways. Each believes his own way the best, and, after all, the proverb signifies nothing.' 'Nothing!' I exclaimed. I was quite struck. Truth is not always agreeable, but truth is above everything else, as the old owl said. I thought over all this, and saw quite plainly that if truth was really so far above everything else, it must be much more valuable than soup from a sausage skewer. So I hastened to get away, that I might be home in time, and bring what was highest and best, and above everything, —namely, the truth. The mice are an enlightened people, and the mouse-king is above them all. He is therefore capable of making me queen for the sake of truth."

"Your truth is a falsehood," said the mouse who had not yet spoken; "I can prepare the soup, and I mean to do so."

How it was prepared.

"I did not travel," said the third mouse; "I stayed in this country: that was the right way. One gains nothing by travelling—everything can be acquired here quite as easily; so I stayed at home. I have not obtained what I know from supernatural beings. I have neither swallowed it, nor learnt it from conversing with owls. I have got it all from my own reflections and thoughts. Will you now set the kettle on the fire—so? Now pour the water in—quite full—up to the brim; place it on the fire; make up a good blaze; keep it burning, that the water may boil; it must boil over and over. There, now I throw in the skewer. Will the mouse-king be pleased now to dip his tail into the boiling water, and stir it round with the tail. The longer the king stirs it, the stronger the soup will become. Nothing more is necessary only to stir it."

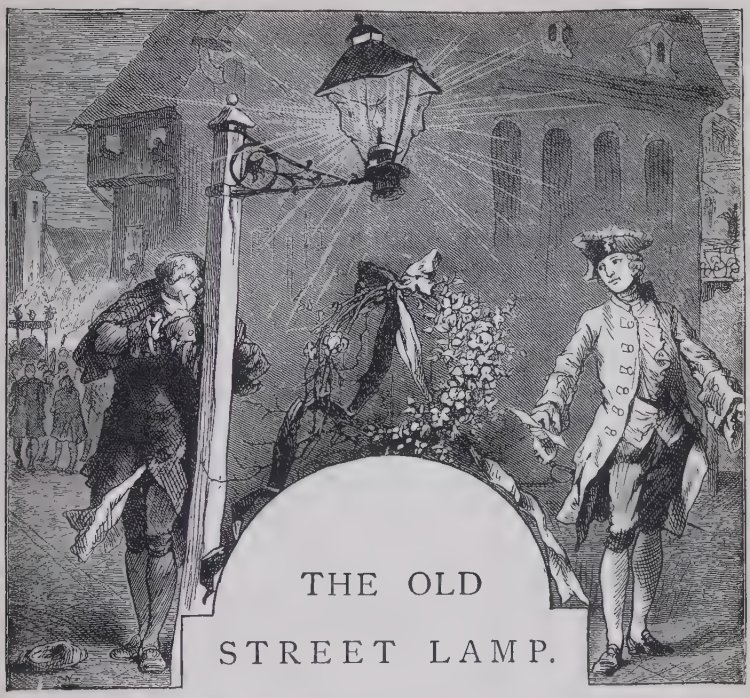
"Can no one else do this?" asked the king.

"No," said the mouse; "only in the tail of the mouse-king is the power contained."

And the water boiled and bubbled, as the mouse-king stood close beside the kettle. It seemed rather a dangerous performance; but he turned round, and put out his tail, as mice do in a dairy, when they wish to skim the cream from a pan of milk with their tails and afterwards lick it off. But the mouse-king's tail had only just touched the hot steam, when he sprang away from the chimney in a great hurry, exclaiming, "Oh, certainly, by all means, you must be my queen; and we will let the soup question rest till our golden wedding, fifty years hence; so that the poor in my kingdom, who are then to have plenty of food, will have something to look forward to for a long time, with great joy."

And very soon the wedding took place. But many of the mice, as they were returning home, said that the soup could not be properly called "soup from a sausage skewer," but "soup from a mouse's tail." They acknowledged also that some of the stories were very well told; but that the whole could have been managed differently. "I should have told it so—and so—and so." These were the critics who are always so clever *afterwards*.

When this story was circulated all over the world, the opinions upon it were divided; but the story remained the same. And, after all, the best way in everything you undertake, great as well as small, is to expect no thanks for anything you may do, even when it refers to "soup from a sausage skewer."



THE OLD STREET LAMP.

Did you ever hear the story of the old street lamp? It is not remarkably interesting, but for once in a way you may as well listen to it. It was a most respectable old lamp, which had seen many, many years of service, and now was to retire with a pension. It was this evening at its post for the last time, giving light to the street. His feelings were something like those of an old dancer at the theatre, who is dancing for the last time, and knows that on the morrow she will be in her garret, alone and forgotten. The lamp had very great anxiety about the next day, for he knew that he had to appear for the first time at the town-hall, to be inspected by the mayor and the council, who were to decide if he were fit for further service or not;—whether the lamp was good enough to be used to light the inhabitants of one of the

suburbs, or in the country, at some factory; and if not, it would be sent at once to an iron foundry, to be melted down. In this latter case it might be turned into anything, and he wondered very much whether he would then be able to remember that he had once been a street lamp, and it troubled him exceedingly. Whatever might happen, one thing seemed certain, that he would be separated from the watchman and his wife, whose family he looked upon as his own. The lamp had been first hung up on the very evening that the watchman, then a robust young man, had entered upon the duties of his office. Ah, well, it was a very long time since one became a lamp and the other a watchman. His wife had a little pride in those days; she seldom condescended to glance at the lamp, excepting when she passed by in the evening, never in the daytime. But in later years, when all these—the watchman, the wife, and the lamp—had grown old, she had attended to it, cleaned it, and supplied it with oil. The old people were thoroughly honest, they had never cheated the lamp of a single drop of the oil provided for it.

This was the lamp's last night in the street, and to-morrow he must go to the town-hall,—two very dark things to think of. No wonder he did not burn brightly. Many other thoughts also passed through his mind. How many persons he had lighted on their way, and how much he had seen; as much, very likely, as the mayor and corporation themselves! None of these thoughts were uttered aloud, however; for he was a good, honourable old lamp, who would not willingly do harm to any one, especially to those in authority. As many things were recalled to his mind, the light would flash up with sudden brightness; he had, at such moments, a conviction that he would be remembered. "There was a handsome young man once," thought he; "it is certainly a long time ago, but I remember he had a little note, written on pink paper with a gold edge; the writing was elegant, evidently a lady's hand: twice he read it through, and kissed it, and then looked up at me, with eyes that said quite plainly, 'I am the happiest of men!' Only he and I know what was written on this his first letter from his lady-love. Ah, yes, and there was

another pair of eyes that I remember,—it is really wonderful how the thoughts jump from one thing to another! A funeral passed through the street; a young and beautiful woman lay on a bier, decked with garlands of flowers, and attended by torches, which quite overpowered my light. All along the street stood the people from the houses, in crowds, ready to join the procession. But when the torches had passed from before me, and I could look round, I saw one person alone, standing, leaning against my post, and weeping. Never shall I forget the sorrowful eyes that looked up at me." These and similar reflections occupied the old street lamp, on this the last time that his light would shine. The sentry, when he is relieved from his post, knows at least who will succeed him, and may whisper a few words to him, but the lamp did not know his successor, or he could have given him a few hints respecting rain, or mist, and could have informed him how far the moon's rays would rest on the pavement, and from which side the wind generally blew, and so on.

On the bridge over the canal stood three persons, who wished to recommend themselves to the lamp, for they thought he could give the office to whomsoever he chose. The first was a herring's head, which could emit light in the darkness. He remarked that it would be a great saving of oil if they placed him on the lamp-post. Number two was a piece of rotten wood, which also shines in the dark. He considered himself descended from an old stem, once the pride of the forest. The third was a glow-worm, and how he found his way there the lamp could not imagine, yet there he was, and could really give light as well as the others. But the rotten wood and the herring's head declared most solemnly, by all they held sacred, that the glow-worm only gave light at certain times, and must not be allowed to compete with themselves. The old lamp assured them that not one of them could give sufficient light to fill the position of a street lamp; but they would believe nothing he said. And when they discovered that he had not the power of naming his successor, they said they were very glad to hear it, for the lamp was too old and worn-out to make a proper choice.

At this moment the wind came rushing round the corner of the street, and through the air-holes of the old lamp. "What is this I hear?" said he; "that you are going away to-morrow? Is this evening the last time we shall meet? Then I must present you with a farewell gift. I will blow into your brain, so that in future you shall not only be able to remember all that you have seen or heard in the past, but your light within shall be so bright, that you shall be able to understand all that is said or done in your presence."

"Oh, that is really a very, very great gift," said the old lamp; "I thank you most heartily. I only hope I shall not be melted down."

"That is not likely to happen yet," said the wind; "and I will also blow a memory into you, so that should you receive other similar presents your old age will pass very pleasantly."

"That is if I am not melted down," said the lamp. "But should I in that case still retain my memory?"

"Do be reasonable, old lamp," said the wind, puffing away.

At this moment the moon burst forth from the clouds. "What will you give the old lamp?" asked the wind.

"I can give nothing," she replied; "I am on the wane, and no lamps have ever given me light, while I have frequently shone upon them." And with these words the moon hid herself again behind the clouds, that she might be saved from further importunities. Just then a drop fell upon the lamp, from the roof of the house, but the drop explained that he was a gift from those grey clouds, and perhaps the best of all gifts. "I shall penetrate you so thoroughly," he said, "that you will have the power of becoming rusty, and, if you wish it, to crumble into dust in one night."

But this seemed to the lamp a very shabby present, and the wind thought so too. "Does no one give any more? Will no one give any more?" shouted the breath of the wind, as loud as it could. Then a bright falling star came down, leaving a broad, luminous streak behind it.

"What was that?" cried the herring's head. "Did not a

star fall? I really believe it went into the lamp. Certainly, when such high-born personages try for the office, we may as well say 'Good-night,' and go home."

And so they did, all three, while the old lamp threw a wonderfully strong light all around him.

"This is a glorious gift," said he; "the bright stars have always been a joy to me, and have always shone more brilliantly than I ever could shine, though I have tried with my whole might; and now they have noticed me, a poor old lamp, and have sent me a gift that will enable me to see clearly every thing that I remember, as if it still stood before me, and to be seen by all those who love me. And herein lies the truest pleasure, for joy which we cannot share with others is only half enjoyed."

"That sentiment does you honour," said the wind; "but for this purpose wax lights will be necessary. If these are not lighted in you, your peculiar faculties will not benefit others in the least. The stars have not thought of this; they suppose that you and every other light must be a wax taper: but I must go down now." So he laid himself to rest.

"Wax tapers, indeed!" said the lamp, "I have never yet had these, nor is it likely I ever shall. If I could only be sure of not being melted down!"

The next day. Well, perhaps we had better pass over the next day. The evening had come, and the lamp was resting in a grandfather's chair, and guess where! Why, at the old watchman's house. He had begged, as a favour, that the mayor and corporation would allow him to keep the street lamp, in consideration of his long and faithful service, as he had himself hung it up and lit it on the day he first commenced his duties, four-and-twenty years ago. He looked upon it almost as his own child; he had no children, so the lamp was given to him. There it lay in the great armchair near to the warm stove. It seemed almost as if it had grown larger, for it appeared quite to fill the chair. The old people sat at their supper, casting friendly glances at the old lamp, whom they would willingly have admitted to a place at the table. It is quite

true that they dwelt in a cellar, two yards deep in the earth, and they had to cross a stone passage to get to their room, but within it was warm and comfortable, and strips of list had been nailed round the door. The bed and the little window had curtains, and everything looked clean and neat. On the window seat stood two curious flower-pots, which a sailor, named Christian, had brought over from the East or West Indies. They were of clay, and in the form of two elephants, with open backs ; they were hollow and filled with earth, and through the open space flowers bloomed. In one grew some very fine chives or leeks ; this was the kitchen garden. The other elephant, which contained a beautiful geranium, they called their flower garden. On the wall hung a large coloured print, representing the congress of Vienna, and all the kings and emperors at once. A clock, with heavy weights, hung on the wall, and went "tick, tick," steadily enough ; yet it was always rather too fast, which, however, the old people said was better than being too slow. They were now eating their supper, while the old street lamp, as we have heard, lay in the grandfather's arm-chair near the stove. It seemed to the lamp as if the whole world had turned round ; but after a while the old watchman looked at the lamp, and spoke of what they had both gone through together,—in rain and in fog ; during the short bright nights of summer, or in the long winter nights ; through the drifting snow-storms, when he longed to be at home in the cellar. Then the lamp felt it was all right again. He saw everything that had happened quite clearly, as if it were passing before him. Surely the wind had given him an excellent gift. The old people were very active and industrious, they were never idle for even a single hour. On Sunday afternoons they would bring out some books, generally a book of travels which they were very fond of. The old man would read aloud about Africa, with its great forests and the wild elephants, while his wife would listen attentively, stealing a glance now and then at the clay elephants, which served as flower-pots.

"I can almost imagine I am seeing it all," she said ; and then how the lamp wished for a wax taper to be lighted in him, for then the old woman would have seen the smallest detail as clearly

as he did himself. The lofty trees, with their thickly entwined branches, the naked negroes on horseback, and whole herds of elephants treading down bamboo thickets with their broad, heavy feet.

"What is the use of all my capabilities," sighed the old lamp, "when I cannot obtain any wax lights; they have only oil and tallow here, and these will not do." One day a great heap of wax-candle ends found their way into the cellar. The larger pieces were burnt, and the smaller ones the old woman kept for waxing her thread. So there were now candles enough, but it never occurred to any one to put a little piece in the lamp.

"Here I am now with my rare powers," thought the lamp. "I have faculties within me, but I cannot share them; they do not know that I could cover these white walls with beautiful tapestry, or change them into noble forests, or, indeed, to anything else they might wish for." The lamp, however, was always kept clean and shining in a corner where it attracted all eyes. Strangers looked upon it as lumber, but the old people did not care for that; they loved the lamp. One day—it was the watchman's birthday—the old woman approached the lamp, smiling to herself, and said, "I will have an illumination to-day in honour of my old man." And the lamp rattled in his metal frame, for he thought, "Now at last I shall have a light within me," but after all no wax light was placed in the lamp, but oil as usual. The lamp burned through the whole evening, and began to perceive too clearly that the gift of the stars would remain a hidden treasure all his life. Then he had a dream; for, to one with his faculties, dreaming was no difficulty. It appeared to him that the old people were dead, and that he had been taken to the iron foundry to be melted down. It caused him quite as much anxiety as on the day when he had been called upon to appear before the mayor and the council at the town-hall. But though he had been endowed with the power of falling into decay from rust when he pleased, he did not make use of it. He was therefore put into the melting-furnace, and changed into as elegant an iron candlestick as you could wish to see, one intended to hold a wax taper. The candlestick was in

the form of an angel, holding a nosegay, in the centre of which the wax taper was to be placed. It was to stand on a green writing-table, in a very pleasant room; many books were scattered about, and splendid paintings hung on the walls. The owner of the room was a poet, and a man of intellect; everything he thought or wrote was pictured around him. Nature showed herself to him sometimes in the dark forests, at others in cheerful meadows where the storks were strutting about, or on the deck of a ship sailing across the foaming sea with the clear, blue sky above, or, at night, the glittering stars. "What powers I possess!" said the lamp, awaking from his dream: "I could almost wish to be melted down; but no, that must not be while the old people live. They love me for myself alone, they keep me bright, and supply me with oil. I am as well off as the picture of the congress, in which they take so much pleasure." And from that time he felt at rest in himself, and not more so than such an honourable old lamp really deserved to be.

The Darning-Needle.

THERE was once a darning-needle who thought herself so fine that she fancied she must be fit for embroidery. "Hold me tight," she would say to the fingers, when they took her up, "don't let me fall; if you do, I shall never be found again, I am so very fine."

"That is your opinion, is it?" said the fingers, as they seized her round the body.

"See, I am coming with a train," said the darning-needle, drawing a long thread after her; but there was no knot in the thread.

The fingers then placed the point of the needle against the cook's slipper. There was a crack in the upper leather, which had to be sewn together.

"What coarse work!" said the darning-needle, "I shall never get through. I shall break!—I am breaking!" And sure enough

she broke. "Did I not say so?" said the darning-needle. "I know I am too fine for such work as that."

"This needle is quite useless for sewing now," said the fingers; but they still held it fast, and the cook dropped some sealing-wax on the needle, and fastened her handkerchief with it in front.

"So now I am a breast-pin," said the darning-needle; "I knew very well I should come to honour some day: merit is sure to rise;" and she laughed, quietly to herself, for of course no one ever saw a darning-needle laugh. And there she sat as proudly as if she were in a state coach, and looked all round her. "May I be allowed to ask if you are made of gold?" she inquired of her neighbour, a pin; "you have a very pretty appearance, and a curious head, although you are rather small. You must take pains to grow, for it is not every one who has sealing-wax dropped upon him;" and as she spoke, the darning-needle drew herself up so proudly that she fell out of the handkerchief right into the sink, which the cook was cleaning. "Now I am going on a journey," said the needle, as she floated away with the dirty water, "I do hope I shall not be lost." But she really was lost in a gutter. "I am too fine for this world," said the darning-needle, as she lay in the gutter; "but I know who I am, and that is always some comfort." So the darning-needle kept up her proud behaviour, and did not lose her good humour. Then there floated over her all sorts of things—chips and straws, and pieces of old newspaper. "See how they sail," said the darning-needle; "they do not know what is under them. I am here, and here I shall stick. See, there goes a chip, thinking of nothing in the world but himself—only a chip. There's a straw going by now; how he turns and twists about! Don't be thinking too much of yourself, or you may chance to run against a stone. There swims a piece of newspaper; what is written upon it has been forgotten long ago, and yet it gives itself airs. I sit here patiently and quietly. I know who I am, so I shall not move."

One day something lying close to the darning-needle glittered so splendidly that she thought it was a diamond; yet it was only a piece of broken bottle. The darning-needle spoke to it,

because it sparkled, and represented herself as a breast-pin. "I suppose you are really a diamond?" she said.

"Why yes, something of the kind," he replied; and so each believed the other to be very valuable, and then they began to talk about the world, and the conceited people in it.

"I have been in a lady's work-box," said the darning-needle, "and this lady was the cook. She had on each hand five fingers, and anything so conceited as these five fingers I have never seen; and yet they were only employed to take me out of the box and to put me back again."

"Were they not high-born?"

"High-born!" said the darning-needle, "no indeed, but so haughty. They were five brothers, all born fingers; they kept very proudly together, though they were of different lengths. The one who stood first in the rank was named the thumb—he was short and thick, and had only one joint in his back, and could therefore make but one bow; but he said that if he were cut off from a man's hand, that man would be unfit for a soldier. Sweet-tooth, his neighbour, dipped himself into sweet or sour, pointed to the sun and moon, and formed the letters when the fingers wrote. Longman, the middle finger, looked over the heads of all the others. Gold-band, the next finger, wore a golden circle round his waist. And little Playman did nothing at all, and seemed proud of it. They were boasters, and boasters they will remain; and therefore I left them."

"And now we sit here and glitter," said the piece of broken bottle.

At the same moment more water streamed into the gutter, so that it overflowed, and the piece of bottle was carried away.

"So he is promoted," said the darning-needle, "while I remain here; I am too fine, but that is my pride, and what do I care?" And so she sat there in her pride, and had many such thoughts as these,—"I could almost fancy that I came from a sunbeam, I am so fine. It seems as if the sunbeams were always looking for me under the water. Ah! I am so fine that even my mother cannot find me. Had I still my old eye, which was broken off, I believe I

should weep; but no, I would not do that, it is not genteel to cry."

One day a couple of street boys were paddling in the gutter, for they sometimes found old nails, farthings, and other treasures. It was dirty work, but they took great pleasure in it. "Hallo!" cried one, as he pricked himself with the darning-needle, "here's a fellow for you."

"I am not a fellow, I am a young lady," said the darning-needle; but no one heard her.

The sealing-wax had come off, and she was quite black; but black makes a person look slender, so she thought herself even finer than before.

"Here comes an egg-shell sailing along," said one of the boys; so they stuck the darning-needle into the egg-shell.

"White walls, and I am black myself," said the darning-needle, "that looks well; now I can be seen, but I hope I shall not be sea-sick, or I shall break again." She was not sea-sick, and she did not break. "It is a good thing against sea-sickness to have a steel stomach, and not to forget one's own importance. Now my sea-sickness has past: delicate people can bear a great deal."

Crack went the egg-shell, as a waggon passed over it. "Good heavens, how it crushes!" said the darning-needle. "I shall be sick now. I am breaking!" But she did not break, though the waggon went over her as she lay at full length; and there let her lie.



The Flax.

THE flax was in full bloom; it had pretty little blue flowers as delicate as the wings of a moth, or even more so. The sun shone, and the showers watered it; and this was just as good for the flax as it is for little children to be washed and then kissed by their mother. They look much prettier for it, and so did the flax.

"People say that I look exceedingly well," said the flax, "and that I am so fine and long that I shall make a beautiful piece of linen. How fortunate I am; it makes me so happy! It is such a pleasant thing to know that something can be made of me. How the sunshine cheers me, and how sweet and refreshing is the rain! My happiness overpowers me; no one in the world can feel happier than I am."

"Ah, yes, no doubt," said the fern, "but you do not know the world yet as well as I do, for my sticks are knotty;" and then it sung quite mournfully—

"Snip, snap, snurre,
Basse lurre:
The song is ended."

"No, it is not ended," said the flax. "To-morrow the sun will

shine, or the rain descend. I feel that I am growing. I feel that I am in full blossom. I am the happiest of all creatures."

Well, one day some people came, who took hold of the flax and pulled it up by the roots—this was painful ; then it was laid in water as if they intended to drown it ; and, after that, placed near a fire as if it were to be roasted ; all this was very shocking. "We cannot expect to be happy always," said the flax ; "by experiencing evil as well as good, we become wise." And certainly there was plenty of evil in store for the flax. It was steeped, and roasted, and broken, and combined ; indeed, it scarcely knew what was done to it. At last it was put on the spinning wheel. "Whirr, whirr," went the wheel, so quickly that the flax could not collect its thoughts. "Well, I have been very happy," he thought in the midst of his pain, "and must be contented with the past ; " and contented he remained till he was put on the loom, and became a beautiful piece of white linen. All the flax, even to the last stalk, was used in making this one piece. "Well, this is quite wonderful ; I could not have believed that I should be so favoured by fortune. The fern really was not wrong with its song of—

'Snip, snap, snurre,
Basse lurre.'

But the song is not ended yet, I am sure ; it is only just beginning. How wonderful it is, that, after all I have suffered, I am made something of at last. I am the luckiest person in the world—so strong and fine ; and how white, and what a length ! This is something different to being a mere plant and bearing flowers. Then, I had no attention, nor any water unless it rained ; now, I am watched and taken care of. Every morning the maid turns me over, and I have a shower-bath from the watering-pot every evening. Yes, and the clergyman's wife noticed me, and said I was the best piece of linen in the whole parish. I cannot be happier than I am now."

After some time, the linen was taken into the house, placed under the scissors, and cut and torn into pieces, and then pricked with needles. This certainly was not pleasant ; but at last it was

made into twelve garments of that kind which people do not like to name, and yet everybody should wear one. "See, now, then," said the flax; "I have become something of importance. This was my destiny; it is quite a blessing. Now I shall be of some use in the world, as every one ought to be; it is only the way to be happy. I am now divided into twelve pieces, and yet we are all one and the same in the whole dozen. It is most extraordinary good fortune."

Years passed away; and at last the linen was so worn it could scarcely hold together. "It must end very soon," said the pieces to each other; "we would gladly have held together a little longer, but it is useless to expect impossibilities." And at length they fell into rags and tatters, and thought it was all over with them, for they were torn to shreds, and steeped in water, and made into a pulp, and dried, and they knew not what besides, till all at once they found themselves beautiful white paper. "Well, now, this is a surprise; a glorious surprise too," said the paper. "I am now finer than ever, and I shall be written upon, and who can tell what fine things I may have written upon me. This is wonderful luck!" And sure enough the most beautiful stories and poetry were written upon it, and only once was there a blot, which was very fortunate. Then people heard the stories and poetry read, and it made them wiser and better; for all that was written had a good and sensible meaning, and a great blessing was contained in the words on this paper.

"I never imagined anything like this," said the paper, "when I was only a little blue flower, growing in the fields. How could I fancy that I should ever be the means of bringing knowledge and joy to men? I cannot understand it myself, and yet it is really so. Heaven knows that I have done nothing myself, but what I was obliged to do with my weak powers for my own preservation; and yet I have been promoted from one joy and honour to another. Each time I think that the song is ended; and then something higher and better begins for me. I suppose now I shall be sent on my travels about the world, so that people may read me. It cannot be otherwise; indeed, it is more than probable;

for I have more splendid thoughts written upon me, than I had pretty flowers in olden times. I am happier than ever."

But the paper did not go on its travels; it was sent to the printer, and all the words written upon it were set up in type, to make a book, or rather, many hundreds of books; for so many more persons could derive pleasure and profit from a printed book than from the written paper; and if the paper had been sent about the world, it would have been worn out before it had got half through its journey.

"This is certainly the wisest plan," said the written paper; "I really did not think of that. I shall remain at home, and be held in honour, like some old grandfather, as I really am, to all these new books. They will do some good. I could not have wandered about as they do. Yet he who wrote all this has looked at me, as every word flowed from his pen upon my surface. I am the most honoured of all."

Then the paper was tied in a bundle with other papers, and thrown into a tub that stood in the washhouse.

"After work, it is well to rest," said the paper, "and a very good opportunity to collect one's thoughts. Now I am able, for the first time, to think of my real condition; and to know one's self is true progress. What will be done with me now, I wonder? No doubt I shall still go forward. I have always progressed hitherto, as I know quite well."

Now it happened one day that all the paper in the tub was taken out, and laid on the hearth to be burnt. People said it could not be sold at the shop, to wrap up butter and sugar, because it had been written upon. The children in the house stood round the stove; for they wanted to see the paper burn, because it flamed up so prettily, and afterwards, among the ashes, so many red sparks could be seen running one after the other, here and there, as quick as the wind. They called it seeing the children come out of school, and the last spark was the schoolmaster. They often thought the last spark had come; and one would cry, "There goes the schoolmaster;" but the next moment another spark would appear, shining so beautifully. How they would

like to know where the sparks all went to! Perhaps we shall find out some day, but we don't know now.

The whole bundle of paper had been placed on the fire, and was soon alight. "Ugh!" cried the paper, as it burst into a bright flame; "ugh!" It was certainly not very pleasant to be burning; but when the whole was wrapped in flames, the flames mounted up into the air, higher than the flax had ever been able to raise its little blue flower, and they glistened as the white linen never could have glistened. All the written letters became quite red in a moment, and all the words and thoughts turned to fire.

"Now I am mounting straight up to the sun," said a voice in the flames; and it was as if a thousand voices echoed the words; and the flames darted up through the chimney, and went out at the top. Then a number of tiny beings, as many in number as the flowers on the flax had been, and invisible to mortal eyes, floated above them. They were even lighter and more delicate than the flowers from which they were born; and as the flames were extinguished, and nothing remained of the paper but black ashes, these little beings danced upon it; and whenever they touched it, bright red sparks appeared.

"The children are all out of school, and the schoolmaster was the last of all," said the children. It was good fun, and they sang over the dead ashes,—

"Snip, snap, snurre,
Basse lurre:
The song is ended."

But the little invisible beings said, "The song is never ended; the most beautiful is yet to come."

But the children could neither hear nor understand this, nor should they; for children must not know everything.

The Shirt Collar.

THERE was once a fine gentleman who possessed among other things a boot-jack and a hair-brush; but he had also the finest shirt collar in the world, and of this collar we are about to hear a story. The collar had become so old that he began to think about getting married; and one day he happened to find himself in the same washing-tub as a garter. "Upon my word," said the shirt collar, "I have never seen anything so slim and delicate, so neat and soft before. May I venture to ask your name?"

"I shall not tell you," replied the garter.

"Where do you reside when you are at home?" asked the shirt collar. But the garter was naturally shy, and did not know how to answer such a question.

"I presume you are a girdle," said the shirt collar, "a sort of under girdle. I see that you are useful, as well as ornamental, my little lady."

"You must not speak to me," said the garter; "I do not think I have given you any encouragement to do so."

"Oh, when any one is as beautiful as you are," said the shirt collar, "is not that encouragement enough?"

"Get away; don't come so near me," said the garter: "you appear to me quite like a man."

"I am a fine gentleman certainly," said the shirt collar, "I possess a boot-jack and a hair-brush." This was not true, for these things belonged to his master; but he was a boaster.

"Don't come so near me," said the garter; "I am not accustomed to it."

"Affectation!" said the shirt collar.

Then they were taken out of the wash-tub, starched, and hung over a chair in the sunshine, and then laid on the ironing-board. And now came the glowing iron. "Mistress widow," said the shirt collar, "little mistress widow, I feel quite warm. I am changing, I am losing all my creases. You are burning a hole in me. Ugh! I propose to you."

"You old rag!" said the flat-iron, driving proudly over the

collar, for she fancied herself a steam-engine, which rolls over the railway and draws carriages. "You old rag!" said she.

The edges of the shirt collar were a little frayed, so the scissors were brought to cut them smooth. "Oh!" exclaimed the shirt collar, "what a first-rate dancer you would make; you can stretch out your leg so well. I never saw anything so charming; I am sure no human being could do the same."

"I should think not," replied the scissors.

"You ought to be a countess," said the shirt collar; "but all I possess consists of a fine gentleman, a boot-jack, and a comb. I wish I had an estate, for your sake."

"What! is he going to propose to me?" said the scissors; and she became so angry that she cut too sharply into the shirt collar, and it was obliged to be thrown by as useless.

"I shall be obliged to propose to the hair-brush," thought the shirt collar; so he remarked one day, "It is wonderful what beautiful hair you have, my little lady. Have you never thought of being engaged?"

"You might know I should think of it," answered the hair-brush; "I am engaged to the boot-jack."

"Engaged!" cried the shirt collar, "now there is no one left to propose to;" and then he pretended to despise all love-making.

A long time passed, and the shirt collar was taken in a bag to the paper-mill. Here was a large company of rags, the fine ones lying by themselves, separated from the coarser, as it ought to be. They had all many things to relate, especially the shirt collar, who was a terrible boaster. "I have had an immense number of love affairs," said the shirt collar, "no one left me any peace. It is true I was a very fine gentleman; quite stuck up. I had a boot-jack and a brush that I never used. You should have seen me then, when I was turned down. I shall never forget my first love; she was a girdle, so charming, and fine, and soft, and she threw herself into a washing-tub for my sake. There was a widow too, who was warmly in love with me, but I let her alone, and she became quite black The next was a first-rate dancer; she gave me the wound from which I still suffer, she was so passionate.

Even my own hair-brush was in love with me, and lost all her hair through neglected love. Yes; I have had great experience of this kind, but my greatest grief was for the garter—the girdle I meant to say—that jumped into the wash-tub. I have a great deal on my conscience, and it is really time I should be turned into white paper."

And the shirt collar came to this at last. All the rags were made into white paper, and the shirt collar became the very identical piece of paper which we now see, and on which this story is printed. It happened as a punishment to him, for having boasted so shockingly of things which were not true. And this is a warning to us, to be careful how we act, for we may some day find ourselves in the rag-bag, to be turned into white paper, on which our whole history may be written, even its most secret actions. And it would not be pleasant to have to run about the world in the form of a piece of paper, telling everything we have done, like the boasting shirt collar.

The Little Match-seller.

It was terribly cold and nearly dark on the last evening of the old year, and the snow was falling fast. In the cold and the darkness, a poor little girl, with bare head and naked feet, roamed through the streets. It is true she had on a pair of slippers when she left home, but they were not of much use. They were very large, so large, indeed, that they had been worn by her mother, and the poor little creature had lost them in running across the street to avoid two carriages that were rolling along at a terrible rate. One of the slippers she could not find, and a boy seized upon the other and ran away with it, saying that he could use it as a cradle, when he had children of his own. So the little girl went on with her little naked feet, which were quite red and blue with the cold. In an old apron she carried a number of matches, and had a bundle of them in her hands. No one had bought anything of her the

whole day, nor had any one given her even a penny. Shivering with cold and hunger, she crept along; poor little child, she looked the picture of misery. The snow-flakes fell on her long, fair hair, which hung in curls on her shoulders, but she regarded them not.

Lights were shining from every window, and there was a savoury smell of roast goose, for it was New-year's eve—yes, she remembered that. In a corner, between two houses, one of which projected beyond the other, she sank down, and huddled herself together. She had drawn her little feet under her, but she could not keep off the cold; and she dared not go home, for she had sold no matches, and could not take home even a penny of money. Her father would certainly beat her; besides, it was almost as cold at home as here, for they had only the roof to cover them, through which the wind howled, although the largest holes had been stopped up with straw and rags. Her little hands were almost frozen with the cold. Ah! perhaps a burning match might be some good, if she could draw it from the bundle and strike it against the wall, just to warm her fingers. She drew one out—"Scratch!" how it sputtered as it burnt! It gave a warm, bright light, like a little candle, as she held her hand over it. It was really a wonderful light. It seemed to the little girl as if she were sitting by a large iron stove, with polished brass feet and a brass ornament. How the fire burned! and seemed so beautifully warm that the child stretched out her feet as if to warm them, when, lo! the flame of the match went out, the stove vanished, and she had only the remains of the half-burnt match in her hand.

She rubbed another match on the wall. It burst into a flame, and where its light fell upon the wall it became as transparent as a veil, and she could see into the room. The table was covered with a snowy white table-cloth, on which stood a splendid dinner service, and a steaming roast goose, stuffed with apples and dried plums. And what was still more wonderful, the goose jumped down from the dish and waddled across the floor, with a knife and fork in its breast, to the little girl. Then the match went out, and there remained nothing but the thick, damp, cold wall before her.

She lighted another match, and then she found herself sitting under a beautiful Christmas-tree. It was larger and more beautifully decorated than the one she had seen through the glass door at the rich merchant's. Thousands of tapers were burning upon the green branches, and coloured pictures, like those she had seen in the show-windows, looked down upon it all. The little one stretched out her hand towards them, and the match went out.

The Christmas lights rose higher and higher, till they looked to her like the stars in the sky. Then she saw a star fall, leaving behind a bright streak of fire. "Some one is dying," thought the little girl; for her old grandmother, the only one who had ever loved her, and who was now dead, had told her that when a star falls, a soul was going up to God.

She again rubbed a match on the wall, and the light shone round her; in the brightness stood her old grandmother, clear and shining, yet mild and loving in her appearance. "Grandmother," cried the little one, "O take me with you; I know you will go away when the match burns out; you will vanish like the warm stove, the roast goose, and the large, glorious Christmas-tree." And she made haste to light the whole bundle of matches, for she wished to keep her grandmother there. And the matches glowed with a light that was brighter than the noon-day, and her grandmother had never appeared so large or so beautiful. She took the little girl in her arms, and they both flew upwards in brightness and joy far above the earth, where there was neither cold nor hunger nor pain, for they were with God.

In the dawn of morning there lay the poor little one, with pale cheeks and smiling mouth, leaning against the wall; she had been frozen to death on the last evening of the old year; and the New-year's sun rose and shone upon the little corpse! The child still sat, in the stiffness of death, holding the matches in her hand, one bundle of which was burnt. "She tried to warm herself," said some. No one imagined what beautiful things she had seen, nor into what glory she had entered with her grandmother, on New-year's day.

The Buckwheat.

VERY often, after a violent thunder-storm, a field of buckwheat appears blackened and singed, as if a flame of fire had passed over it. The country people say that this appearance is caused by lightning; but I will tell you what the sparrow says, and the sparrow heard it from an old willow-tree which grew near a field of buckwheat, and is there still. It is a large venerable tree, though a little crippled by age. The trunk has been split, and out of the crevice grass and brambles grow. The tree bends forward slightly, and the branches hang quite down to the ground, just like green hair. Corn grows in all the surrounding fields, not only rye and barley, but oats,—pretty oats that, when ripe, look like a number of little golden canary-birds sitting on a bough. The corn has a smiling look, and the heaviest and richest ears bend their heads low as if in pious humility. Once there was also a field of buckwheat, and this field was exactly opposite to the old willow-tree. The buckwheat did not bend like the other grain, but erected its head proudly and stiffly on the stem. "I am as valuable as any other corn," said he, "and I am much handsomer; my flowers are as beautiful as the bloom of the apple blossom, and it is a pleasure to look at us. Do you know of anything prettier than we are, you old willow-tree?"

And the willow-tree nodded his head, as if he would say, "Indeed I do."

But the buckwheat spread itself out with pride, and said, "Stupid tree; he is so old that grass grows out of his body."

There arose a very terrible storm. All the field-flowers folded their leaves together, or bowed their little heads, while the storm passed over them, but the buckwheat stood erect in its pride. "Bend your head as we do," said the flowers.

"I have no occasion to do so," replied the buckwheat.

"Bend your head as we do," cried the ears of corn; "the angel of the storm is coming; his wings spread from the sky above to the earth beneath. He will strike you down before you can cry for mercy."

"But I will not bend my head," said the buckwheat.

"Close your flowers and bend your leaves," said the old willow-tree. "Do not look at the lightning when the cloud bursts; even men cannot do that. In a flash of lightning heaven opens, and we can look in; but the sight will strike even human beings blind. What then must happen to us, who only grow out of the earth, and are so inferior to them, if we venture to do so?"

"Inferior, indeed!" said the buckwheat. "Now I intend to have a peep into heaven." Proudly and boldly he looked up, while the lightning flashed across the sky as if the whole world were in flames.

When the dreadful storm had passed, the flowers and the corn raised their drooping heads in the pure still air, refreshed by the rain, but the buckwheat lay like a weed in the field, burnt to blackness by the lightning. The branches of the old willow-tree rustled in the wind, and large water-drops fell from his green leaves as if the old willow were weeping. Then the sparrows asked why he was weeping, when all around seemed so cheerful. "See," they said, "how the sun shines, and the clouds float in the blue sky. Do you not smell the sweet perfume from flower and bush? Wherefore do you weep, old willow-tree?" Then the willow told them of the haughty pride of the buckwheat, and of the punishment which followed in consequence.

This is the story told me by the sparrows, one evening when I begged them to relate some tale to me.

The Racers.

A PRIZE, or rather two prizes, a great one and a small one, had been awarded for the greatest swiftness in running,—not in a single race, but for the whole year.

"I obtained the first prize," said the hare. "Justice must still be carried out, even when one has relations and good friends among the prize committee; but that the snail should have

received the second prize, I consider almost an insult to myself."

"No," said the fence-rail, who had been a witness at the distribution of prizes; "there should be some consideration for industry and perseverance. I have heard many respectable people say so, and I can quite understand it. The snail certainly took half a year to get over the threshold of the door; but he injured himself, and broke his collar-bone by the haste he made. He gave himself up entirely to the race, and ran with his house on his back, which was all, of course, very praiseworthy; and therefore he obtained the second prize."

"I think I ought to have had some consideration too," said the swallow. "I should imagine no one can be swifter in soaring and flight than I am; and how far I have been! far, far away."

"Yes, that is your misfortune," said the fence-rail; "you are so fickle, so unsettled; you must always be travelling about into foreign lands when the cold commences here. You have no love of fatherland in you. There can be no consideration for you."

"But now, if I had been lying the whole winter in the moor," said the swallow, "and suppose I slept the whole time, would that be taken into account?"

"Bring a certificate from the old moor-hen," said he, "that you have slept away half your time in fatherland; then you will be treated with some consideration."

"I deserved the first prize, and not the second," said the snail. "I know so much, at least, that the hare only ran from cowardice, and because he thought there was danger in delay. I, on the other hand, made running the business of my life, and have become a cripple in the service. If any one had a first prize, it ought to have been myself. But I do not understand chattering and boasting; on the contrary, I despise it." And the snail spat at them with contempt.

"I am able to affirm with word and oath, that each prize—at least, those for which I voted—was given with just and proper

consideration," said the old boundary post in the wood, who was a member of the committee of judges. "I always act with due order, consideration, and calculation. Seven times have I already had the honour to be present at the distribution of the prizes, and to vote; but to-day is the first time I have been able to carry out my will. I always reckon the first prize by going through the alphabet from the beginning, and the second by going through from the end. Be so kind as to give me your attention, and I will explain to you how I reckon from the beginning. The eighth letter from A is H, and there we have H for hare; therefore I awarded to the hare the first prize. The eighth letter from the end of the alphabet is S, and therefore the snail received the second prize. Next year, the letter I will have its turn for the first prize, and the letter R for the second."

"I should really have voted for myself," said the mule, "if I had not been one of the judges on the committee. Not only the rapidity with which advance is made, but every other quality should have due consideration; as, for instance, how much weight a candidate is able to draw; but I have not brought this quality forward now, nor the sagacity of the hare in his flight, nor the cunning with which he suddenly springs aside and doubles, to lead people on a false track, thinking he has concealed himself. No; there is something else on which more stress should be laid, and which ought not to be left unnoticed. I mean that which mankind call the beautiful. It is on the beautiful that I particularly fix my eyes. I observed the well-grown ears of the hare; it is a pleasure to me to observe how long they are. It seemed as if I saw myself again in the days of my childhood; and so I voted for the hare."

"Buz," said the fly; "there, I'm not going to make a long speech; but I wish to say something about hares. I have really overtaken more than one hare, when I have been seated on the engine in front of a railway train. I often do so. One can then so easily judge of one's own swiftness. Not long ago, I crushed the hind legs of a young hare. He had been running a long time before the engine; he had no idea that *I* was travelling there.

At last he had to stop in his career, and the engine ran over his hind legs, and crushed them; for *I* sat upon it. I left him lying there, and rode on farther. I call that conquering him; but I do not want the prize."

"It really seems to me," thought the wild rose, though she did not express her opinion aloud—it is not in her nature to do so,—though it would have been quite as well if she had; "it certainly seems to me that the sunbeam ought to have had the honour of receiving the first prize. The sunbeam flies in a few minutes along the immeasurable path from the sun to us. It arrives in such strength, that all nature awakes to loveliness and beauty; we roses blush and exhale fragrance in its presence. Our worshipful judges don't appear to have noticed this at all. Were I the sunbeam, I would give each one of them a sun-stroke; but that would only make them mad, and they are mad enough already. I only hope," continued the rose, "that peace may reign in the wood. It is glorious to bloom, to be fragrant, and to live; to live in story and in song. The sunbeam will outlive us all."

"What is the first prize?" asked the earthworm, who had overslept the time, and only now came up.

"It contains a free admission to a cabbage-garden," replied the mule. "I proposed that as one of the prizes. The hare most decidedly must have it; and I, as an active and thoughtful member of the committee, took especial care that the prize should be one of advantage to him; so now he is provided for. The snail can now sit on the fence, and lick up moss and sunshine. He has also been appointed one of the first judges of swiftness in racing It is worth much to know that *one* of the members is a man of talent in the thing men call a 'committee.' I must say I expect much in the future; we have already made such a good beginning."

The Shepherdess and the Sweep.

Have you ever seen an old wooden cupboard quite black with age, and ornamented with carved foliage and curious figures? Well, just such a cupboard stood in a parlour, and had been left to the family as a legacy by the great-grandmother. It was covered from top to bottom with carved roses and tulips; the most curious scrolls were drawn upon it, and out of them peeped little stags' heads, with antlers. In the middle of the cupboard door was the carved figure of a man most ridiculous to look at. He grinned at you, for no one could call it laughing. He had goat's legs, little horns on his head, and a long beard; the children in the room always called him, "Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs." It was certainly a very difficult name to pronounce, and there are very few who ever receive such a title, but then it seemed wonderful how he came to be carved at all; yet there he was, always looking at the table under the looking-glass, where stood a very pretty little shepherdess, made of china. Her shoes were gilt, and her dress had a red rose for an ornament. She wore a hat, and carried a crook, that were both gilded, and looked very bright and pretty. Close by her side stood a little chimney-sweeper, as black as a coal, and also made of china. He was, however, quite as clean and neat as any other china figure; he only represented a black chimney-sweeper, and the china workers might just as well have made him a prince, had they felt inclined to do so. He stood holding his ladder quite handily, and his face was as fair and rosy as a girl's; indeed, that was rather a mistake, it should have had some black marks on it. He and the shepherdess had been placed close together, side by side; and, being so placed, they became engaged to each other, for they were very well suited, being both made of the same sort of china, and being equally fragile. Close to them stood another figure, three times as large as they were, and also made of china. He was an old Chinaman, who could nod his head, and used to pretend that he was the grandfather of the shepherdess, although he could not prove it. He, however,

assumed authority over her, and therefore when "Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs" asked for the little shepherdess to be his wife, he nodded his head to show that he consented. "You will have a husband," said the old Chinaman to her, "who I really believe is made of mahogany. He will make you the lady of Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs. He has the whole cupboard full of silver plate, which he keeps locked up in secret drawers."

"I won't go into the dark cupboard," said the little shepherdess. "I have heard that he has eleven china wives there already."

"Then you shall be the twelfth," said the old Chinaman. "To-night as soon as you hear a rattling in the old cupboard, you shall be married, as true as I am a Chinaman;" and then he nodded his head and fell asleep.

Then the little shepherdess cried, and looked at her sweetheart, the china chimney-sweeper. "I must entreat you," said she, "to go out with me into the wide world, for we cannot stay here."

"I will do whatever you wish," said the little chimney-sweeper; "let us go immediately: I think I shall be able to maintain you with my profession."

"If we were but safely down from the table!" said she; "I shall not be happy till we are really out in the world."

Then he comforted her, and showed her how to place her little foot on the carved edge and gilt-leaf ornaments of the table. He brought his little ladder to help her, and so they contrived to reach the floor. But when they looked at the old cupboard, they saw it was all in an uproar. The carved stags pushed out their heads, raised their antlers, and twisted their necks. The major-general sprung up in the air, and cried out to the old Chinaman, "They are running away! they are running away!" The two were rather frightened at this, so they jumped into the drawer of the window-seat. Here were three or four packs of cards not quite complete, and a doll's theatre, which had been built up very neatly. A comedy was being performed in it, and all the queens of diamonds, clubs, and hearts, and spades, sat in

the first row fanning themselves with tulips, and behind them stood all the knaves, showing that they had heads above and below as playing cards generally have. The play was about two lovers, who were not allowed to marry, and the shepherdess wept because it was so like her own story. "I cannot bear it," said she, "I must get out of the drawer;" but when they reached the floor, and cast their eyes on the table, there was the old Chinaman awake and shaking his whole body, till all at once down he came on the floor, "plump." "The old Chinaman is coming," cried the little shepherdess in a fright, and down she fell on one knee.

"I have thought of something," said the chimney-sweeper; "let us get into the great pot-pourri jar which stands in the corner; there we can lie on rose-leaves and lavender, and throw salt in his eyes if he comes near us."

"No, that will never do," said she, "because I know that the Chinaman and the pot-pourri jar were lovers once, and there always remains behind a feeling of good-will between those who have been so intimate as that. No, there is nothing left for us but to go out into the wide world."

"Have you really courage enough to go out into the wide world with me?" said the chimney-sweeper; "have you thought how large it is, and that we can never come back here again?"

"Yes, I have," she replied.

When the chimney-sweeper saw that she was quite firm, he said, "My way is through the stove and up the chimney. Have you courage to creep with me through the fire-box, and the iron pipe? When we get to the chimney I shall know how to manage very well. We shall soon climb too high for any one to reach us, and we shall come through a hole in the top out into the wide world." So he led her to the door of the stove.

"It looks very dark," said she; still she went in with him through the stove and through the pipe, where it was as dark as pitch.

"Now we are in the chimney," said he; "and look, there is a beautiful star shining above it." It was a real star shining down

upon them as if it would show them the way. So they clambered, and crept on, and a frightfully steep place it was; but the chimney-sweeper helped her and supported her, till they got higher and higher. He showed her the best places on which to set her little



"LEANED HER HEAD ON HER CHIMNEY-SWEEPER'S SHOULDER."

china foot, so at last they reached the top of the chimney, and sat themselves down, for they were very tired, as may be supposed. The sky, with all its stars, was over their heads, and below were the roofs of the town. They could see for a very long distance out into the wide world, and the poor little shepherdess leaned her

head on her chimney-sweeper's shoulder, and wept till she washed the gilt off her sash; the world was so different to what she expected. "This is too much," she said; "I cannot bear it, the world is too large. Oh, I wish I were safe back on the table again, under the looking-glass; I shall never be happy till I am safe back again. Now I have followed you out into the wide world, you will take me back, if you love me."

Then the chimney-sweeper tried to reason with her, and spoke of the old Chinaman, and of the Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs; but she sobbed so bitterly, and kissed her little chimney-sweeper till he was obliged to do all she asked, foolish as it was. And so, with a great deal of trouble, they climbed down the chimney, and then crept through the pipe and stove, which were certainly not very pleasant places. Then they stood in the dark fire-box, and listened behind the door, to hear what was going on in the room. As it was all quiet, they peeped out. Alas! there lay the old Chinaman on the floor; he had fallen down from the table as he attempted to run after them, and was broken into three pieces; his back had separated entirely, and his head had rolled into a corner of the room. The major-general stood in his old place, and appeared lost in thought.

"This is terrible," said the little shepherdess. "My poor old grandfather is broken to pieces, and it is our fault. I shall never live after this;" and she wrung her little hands.

"He can be riveted," said the chimney-sweeper; "he can be riveted. Do not be so hasty. If they cement his back, and put a good rivet in it, he will be as good as new, and be able to say as many disagreeable things to us as ever."

"Do you think so?" said she; and then they climbed up to the table, and stood in their old places.

"As we have done no good," said the chimney-sweeper, "we might as well have remained here, instead of taking so much trouble."

"I wish grandfather was riveted," said the shepherdess. "Will it cost much, I wonder?"

And she had her wish. The family had the Chinaman's back

mended, and a strong rivet put through his neck; he looked as good as new, but he could no longer nod his head.

"You have become proud since your fall broke you to pieces," said Major-general-field-sergeant-commander Billy-goat's-legs. "You have no reason to give yourself such airs. Am I to have her or not?"

The chimney-sweeper and the little shepherdess looked piteously at the old Chinaman, for they were afraid he might nod; but he was not able: besides, it was so tiresome to be always telling strangers he had a rivet in the back of his neck.

And so the little china people remained together, and were glad of the grandfather's rivet, and continued to love each other till they were broken to pieces.

The Goblin and the Huckster.

THERE was once a regular student, who lived in a garret, and had no possessions. And there was also a regular huckster, to whom the house belonged, and who occupied the ground floor. A goblin lived with the huckster, because at Christmas he always had a large dish full of jam, with a great piece of butter in the middle. The huckster could afford this; and therefore the goblin remained with the huckster, which was very cunning of him.

One evening the student came into the shop through the back door to buy candles and cheese for himself; he had no one to send, and therefore he came himself; he obtained what he wished, and then the huckster and his wife nodded good evening to him, and she was a woman who could do more than merely nod, for she had usually plenty to say for herself. The student nodded in return as he turned to leave, then suddenly stopped, and began reading the piece of paper in which the cheese was wrapped. It was a leaf torn out of an old book, a book that ought not to have been torn up, for it was full of poetry.

"Yonder lies some more of the same sort," said the huckster:

"I gave an old woman a few coffee berries for it; you shall have the rest for sixpence, if you will."

"Indeed I will," said the student; "give me the book instead of the cheese; I can eat my bread and butter without cheese. It would be a sin to tear up a book like this. You are a clever man, and a practical man; but you understand no more about poetry than that cask yonder."

This was a very rude speech, especially against the cask; but the huckster and the student both laughed, for it was only said in fun. But the goblin felt very angry that any man should venture to say such things to a huckster who was a householder and sold the best butter. As soon as it was night, and the shop closed, and every one in bed except the student, the goblin stepped softly into the bedroom where the huckster's wife slept, and took away her tongue, which, of course, she did not then want. Whatever object in the room he placed this tongue upon immediately received voice and speech, and was able to express its thoughts and feelings as readily as the lady herself could do. It could only be used by one object at a time, which was a good thing, as a number speaking at once would have caused great confusion. The goblin laid the tongue upon the cask, in which lay a quantity of old newspapers.

"Is it really true," he asked, "that you do not know what poetry is?"

"Of course I know," replied the cask: "poetry is something that always stands in the corner of a newspaper, and is sometimes cut out; and I may venture to affirm that I have more of it in me than the student has, and I am only a poor tub of the huckster's."

Then the goblin placed the tongue on the coffee mill; and how it did go to be sure! Then he put it on the butter tub and cash box, and they all expressed the same opinion as the waste-paper tub; and a majority must always be respected.

"Now I shall go and tell the student," said the goblin; and with these words he went quietly up the back stairs to the garret where the student lived. He had a candle burning still, and the

goblin peeped through the keyhole and saw that he was reading in the torn book, which he had bought out of the shop. But how light the room was! From the book shot forth a ray of light which grew broad and full, like the stem of a tree, from which bright rays spread upward and over the student's head. Each leaf was fresh, and each flower was like a beautiful female head; some with dark and sparkling eyes, and others with eyes that were wonderfully blue and clear. The fruit gleamed like stars, and the room was filled with sounds of beautiful music. The little goblin



"FROM THE BOOK SHOT FORTH A RAY OF LIGHT."

had never imagined, much less seen or heard of, any sight so glorious as this. He stood still on tiptoe, peeping in, till the light went out in the garret. The student no doubt had blown out his candle and gone to bed; but the little goblin remained standing there nevertheless, and listening to the music which still sounded on, soft and beautiful, a sweet cradle-song for the student, who had lain down to rest.

"This is a wonderful place," said the goblin; "I never expected such a thing. I should like to stay here with the student;"

and then the little man thought it over, for he was a sensible little sprite. At last he sighed, "but the student has no jam!" So he went downstairs again into the huckster's shop, and it was a good thing he got back when he did, for the cask had almost worn out the lady's tongue; he had given a description of all that he contained on one side, and was just about to turn himself over to the other side to describe what was there, when the goblin entered and restored the tongue to the lady. But from that time forward, the whole shop, from the cash box down to the pinewood logs, formed their opinions from that of the cask; and they all had such confidence in him, and treated him with so much respect, that when the huckster read the criticisms on theatricals and art of an evening, they fancied it must all come from the cask.

But after what he had seen, the goblin could no longer sit and listen quietly to the wisdom and understanding downstairs; so, as soon as the evening light glimmered in the garret, he took courage, for it seemed to him as if the rays of light were strong cables, drawing him up, and obliging him to go and peep through the keyhole; and, while there, a feeling of vastness came over him such as we experience by the ever-moving sea, when the storm breaks forth; and it brought tears into his eyes. He did not himself know why he wept, yet a kind of pleasant feeling mingled with his tears. "How wonderfully glorious it would be to sit with the student under such a tree;" but that was out of the question, he must be content to look through the keyhole, and be thankful for even that.

There he stood on the cold landing, with the autumn wind blowing down upon him through the trap-door. It was very cold; but the little creature did not really feel it, till the light in the garret went out, and the tones of music died away. Then how he shivered, and crept downstairs again to his warm corner, where it felt home-like and comfortable. And when Christmas came again, and brought the dish of jam and the great lump of butter, he liked the huckster best of all.

Soon after, in the middle of the night, the goblin was awoke by a terrible noise and knocking against the window shutters and the

house doors, and by the sound of the watchman's horn; for a great fire had broken out, and the whole street appeared full of flames. Was it in their house, or a neighbour's? No one could tell, for terror had seized upon all. The huckster's wife was so bewildered that she took her gold ear-rings out of her ears and put them in her pocket, that she might save something at least. The huckster ran to get his business papers, and the servant resolved to save her black silk mantle, which she had managed to buy. Each wished to keep the best things they had. The goblin had the same wish; for, with one spring, he was upstairs and in the student's room, whom he found standing by the open window, and looking quite calmly at the fire, which was raging at the house of a neighbour opposite. The goblin caught up the wonderful book which lay on the table, and popped it into his red cap, which he held tightly with both hands. The greatest treasure in the house was saved; and he ran away with it to the roof, and seated himself on the chimney. The flames of the burning house opposite illuminated him as he sat, both hands pressed tightly over his cap, in which the treasure lay; and then he found out what feelings really reigned in his heart, and knew exactly which way they tended. And yet, when the fire was extinguished, and the goblin again began to reflect, he hesitated, and said at last, "I must divide myself between the two; I cannot quite give up the huckster, because of the jam."

And this is a representation of human nature. We are like the goblin; we all go to visit the huckster "because of the jam."

What the Old Man does is always Right.

I WILL tell you a story that was told me when I was a little boy. Every time I thought of this story, it seemed to me more and more charming; for it is with stories as it is with many people—they become better as they grow older.

I have no doubt that you have been in the country, and seen a very old farmhouse, with a thatched roof, and mosses and small

plants growing wild upon it. There is a stork's nest on the ridge of the gable, for we cannot do without the stork. The walls of the house are sloping, and the windows are low, and only one of the latter is made to open. The baking-oven sticks out of the wall like a great knob. An elder-tree hangs over the palings; and beneath its branches, at the foot of the paling, is a pool of water, in which a few ducks are disporting themselves. There is a yard-dog too, who barks at all comers. Just such a farm-house as this stood in a country lane; and in it dwelt an old couple, a peasant and his wife. Small as their possessions were, they had one article they could not do without, and that was a horse, which contrived to live upon the grass which it found by the side of the high-road. The old peasant rode into the town upon this horse, and his neighbours often borrowed it of him, and paid for the loan of it by rendering some service to the old couple. After a time they thought it would be as well to sell the horse, or exchange it for something which might be more useful to them. But what might this *something* be?

"You'll know best, old man," said the wife. "It is fair-day to-day; so ride into town, and get rid of the horse for money, or make a good exchange; whichever you do will be right to me, so ride to the fair."

And she fastened his neckerchief for him; for she could do that better than he could, and she could also tie it very prettily in a double bow. She also smoothed his hat round and round with the palm of her hand, and gave him a kiss. Then he rode away upon the horse that was to be sold or bartered for something else. Yes, the old man knew what he was about. The sun shone with great heat, and not a cloud was to be seen in the sky. The road was very dusty; for a number of people, all going to the fair, were driving, riding, or walking upon it. There was no shelter anywhere from the hot sunshine. Among the rest, a man came trudging along, and driving a cow to the fair. The cow was as beautiful a creature as any cow could be.

"She gives good milk, I am certain," said the peasant to himself. "That would be a very good exchange: the cow for the



THE OLD MAN'S BARGAINS.

horse. Hallo there! you with the cow," he said. "I tell you what; I dare say a horse is of more value than a cow; but I don't care for that,—a cow will be more useful to me; so, if you like, we'll exchange."

"To be sure I will," said the man.

Accordingly the exchange was made; and as the matter was settled, the peasant might have turned back; for he had done the business he came to do. But, having made up his mind to go to the fair, he determined to do so, if only to have a look at it; so on he went to the town with his cow. Leading the animal, he strode on sturdily, and, after a short time, overtook a man who was driving a sheep. It was a good fat sheep, with a fine fleece on its back.

"I should like to have that fellow," said the peasant to himself. "There is plenty of grass for him by our palings, and in the winter we could keep him in the room with us. Per-

haps it would be more profitable to have a sheep than a cow. Shall I exchange?"

The man with the sheep was quite ready, and the bargain was quickly made. And then our peasant continued his way on the high-road with his sheep. Soon after this, he overtook another man, who had come into the road from a field, and was carrying a large goose under his arm.

"What a heavy creature you have there!" said the peasant; "it has plenty of feathers and plenty of fat, and would look well tied to a string, or paddling in the water at our place. That would be very useful to my old woman; she could make all sorts of profit out of it. How often she has said, 'If now we only had a goose!' Now here is an opportunity, and, if possible, I will get it for her. Shall we exchange? I will give you my sheep for your goose, and thanks into the bargain."

The other had not the least objection, and accordingly the exchange was made, and our peasant became possessor of the goose. By this time, he had arrived very near the town. The crowd on the high-road had been gradually increasing, and there was quite a rush of men and cattle. The cattle walked on the path and by the palings, and at the turnpike-gate they even walked into the toll-keeper's potato-field, where one fowl was strutting about with a string tied to its leg, for fear it should take fright at the crowd, and run away and get lost. The tail-feathers of this fowl were very short, and it winked with both its eyes, and looked very cunning, as it said, "Cluck, cluck." What were the thoughts of the fowl as it said this I cannot tell you; but directly our good man saw it, he thought, "Why that's the finest fowl I ever saw in my life; it's finer than our parson's brood hen, upon my word. I should like to have that fowl. Fowls can always pick up a few grains that lie about, and almost keep themselves. I think it would be a good exchange if I could get it for my goose. Shall we exchange?" he asked the toll-keeper.

"Exchange," repeated the man; "well, it would not be a bad thing."

And so they made an exchange,—the toll-keeper at the

turnpike-gate kept the goose, and the peasant carried off the fowl. Now he really had done a great deal of business on his way to the fair, and he was hot and tired. He wanted something to eat, and a glass of ale to refresh himself; so he turned his steps to an inn. He was just about to enter when the ostler came out, and they met at the door. The ostler was carrying a sack. "What have you in that sack?" asked the peasant.

"Rotten apples," answered the ostler; "a whole sackful of them. They will do to feed the pigs with."

"Why that will be terrible waste," he replied; "I should like to take them home to my old woman. Last year the old apple-tree by the grass-plot only bore one apple, and we kept it in the cupboard till it was quite withered and rotten. It was always property, my old woman said; and here she would see a great deal of property—a whole sackful: I should like to show them to her."

"What will you give me for the sackful?" asked the ostler.

"What will I give? Well, I will give you my fowl in exchange."

So he gave up the fowl, and received the apples, which he carried into the inn parlour. He leaned the sack carefully against the stove, and then went to the table. But the stove was hot, and he had not thought of that. Many guests were present—horse-dealers, cattle-drovers, and two Englishmen. The Englishmen were so rich that their pockets quite bulged out and seemed ready to burst; and they could bet too, as you shall hear. "Hiss—s—s, hiss—s—s." What could that be by the stove? The apples were beginning to roast. "What is that?" asked one.

"Why, do you know——" said our peasant. And then he told them the whole story of the horse, which he had exchanged for a cow, and all the rest of it, down to the apples.

"Well, your old woman will give it you well when you get home," said one of the Englishmen. "Won't there be a noise?"

"What! Give me what?" said the peasant. "Why, she will kiss me, and say, 'what the old man does is always right.'"

"Let us lay a wager on it," said the Englishman. "We'll

wager you a ton of coined gold, a hundred pounds to the hundredweight."

"No; a bushelful will be enough," replied the peasant. "I can only set a bushel of apples against it, and I'll throw myself and my old woman into the bargain; that will pile up the measure, I fancy."

"Done! taken!" and so the bet was made.

Then the landlord's coach came to the door, and the two Englishmen and the peasant got in, and away they drove, and soon arrived and stopped at the peasant's hut. "Good evening, old woman." "Good evening, old man." "I've made the exchange."

"Ah, well, you understand what you're about," said the woman. Then she embraced him, and paid no attention to the strangers, nor did she notice the sack.

"I got a cow in exchange for the horse."

"Thank Heaven," said she. "Now we shall have plenty of milk, and butter, and cheese on the table. That was a capital exchange."

"Yes, but I changed the cow for a sheep."

"Ah, better still!" cried the wife. "You always think of everything; we have just enough pasture for a sheep. Ewe's milk and cheese, woollen jackets and stockings! The cow could not give all these, and her hairs only fall off. How you think of everything!"

"But I changed away the sheep for a goose."

"Then we shall have roast goose to eat this year. You dear old man, you are always thinking of something to please me. This is delightful. We can let the goose walk about with a string tied to her leg, so she will be fatter still before we roast her."

"But I gave away the goose for a fowl."

"A fowl! Well, that was a good exchange," replied the woman. "The fowl will lay eggs and hatch them, and we shall have chickens; we shall soon have a poultry-yard. Oh, this is just what I was wishing for."

"Yes, but I exchanged the fowl for a sack of shrivelled apples."

"What! I must really give you a kiss for that!" exclaimed the wife. "My dear, good husband, now I'll tell you something. Do you know, almost as soon as you left me this morning I began thinking of what I could give you nice for supper this evening, and then I thought of fried eggs and bacon, with sweet herbs; I had eggs and bacon, but I wanted the herbs; so I went over to the schoolmaster's: I knew they had plenty of herbs, but the schoolmistress is very mean, although she can smile so sweetly. I begged her to lend me a handful of herbs. 'Lend!' she exclaimed, 'I have nothing to lend; nothing at all grows in our garden, not even a shrivelled apple; I could not even lend you a shrivelled apple, my dear woman.' But now I can lend her ten, or a whole sackful, which I'm very glad of; it makes me laugh to think about it;" and then she gave him a hearty kiss.

"Well, I like all this," said both the Englishmen; "always going down the hill, and yet always merry; it's worth the money to see it." So they paid a bushel of gold to the peasant, who, whatever he did, was not scolded, but kissed.

Yes, it always pays best when the wife sees and maintains that her husband knows best, and that whatever he does is right.

This is a story which I heard when I was a child; and now you have heard it too, and know that, "What the old man does is always right."

The Jewish Maiden.

In a charity school, among the children, sat a little Jewish girl. She was a good, intelligent child, and very quick at her lessons; but the Scripture-lesson class she was not allowed to join, for this was a Christian school. During the hour of this lesson, the Jewish girl was allowed to learn her geography, or to work her sum for the next day; and when her geography lesson was perfect, the book remained open before her, but she read not another word, for she sat silently listening to the words of the Christian teacher. He soon became aware that the little one was paying more

attention to what he said than most of the other children. "Read your book, Sarah," he said to her gently.

But again and again he saw her dark, beaming eyes fixed upon him; and once, when he asked her a question, she could answer him even better than the other children. She had not only heard, but understood his words, and pondered them in her heart. Her father, a poor but honest man, had placed his daughter at the school on the condition that she should not be instructed in the Christian faith. But it might have caused confusion, or raised discontent in the minds of the other children, if she had been sent out of the room, so she remained; and now it was evident this could not go on. The teacher went to her father, and advised him to remove his daughter from the school, or to allow her to become a Christian. "I cannot any longer be an idle spectator of those beaming eyes, which express such a deep and earnest longing for the words of the gospel," said he.

Then the father burst into tears. "I know very little of the law of my fathers," he said; "but Sarah's mother was firm in her faith as a daughter of Israel, and I vowed to her on her deathbed that our child should never be baptized. I must keep my vow: it is to me even as a covenant with God Himself." And so the little Jewish girl left the Christian school.

Years rolled by. In one of the smallest provincial towns, in a humble household, lived a poor maiden of the Jewish faith, as servant. Her hair was black as ebony, her eye dark as night, yet full of light and brilliancy so peculiar to the daughters of the East. It was Sarah. The expression in the face of the grown-up maiden was still the same as when, a child, she sat on the schoolroom form listening with thoughtful eyes to the words of the Christian teacher. Every Sunday there sounded forth from a church close by the tones of an organ and the singing of the congregation. The Jewish girl heard them in the house where, industrious and faithful in all things, she performed her household duties. "Thou shalt keep the Sabbath holy," said the voice of the law in her heart; but her Sabbath was a working day among the Christians, which was a great trouble to her. And then as the thought arose

in her mind, "Does God reckon by days and hours?" her conscience felt satisfied on this question, and she found it a comfort to her, that on the Christian Sabbath she could have an hour for her own prayers undisturbed. The music and singing of the congregation sounded in her ears while at work in her kitchen, till the place itself became sacred to her. Then she would read in the Old Testament, that treasure and comfort to her people, and it was indeed the only Scriptures she could read. Faithfully in her inmost thoughts had she kept the words of her father to her teacher when she left the school, and the vow he had made to her dying mother that she should never receive Christian baptism. The New Testament must remain to her a sealed book, and yet she knew a great deal of its teachings, and the sound of the gospel truths still lingered among the recollections of her childhood.

One evening she was sitting in a corner of the dining-room, while her master read aloud. It was not the gospel he read, but an old story-book; therefore she might stay and listen to him. The story related that a Hungarian knight, who had been taken prisoner by a Turkish pasha, was most cruelly treated by him. He caused him to be yoked with his oxen to the plough, and driven with blows from the whip till the blood flowed, and he almost sunk with exhaustion and pain. The faithful wife of the knight at home gave up all her jewels, mortgaged her castle and land, and his friends raised large sums to make up the ransom demanded for his release, which was most enormously high. It was collected at last, and the knight released from slavery and misery. Sick and exhausted, he reached home.

Ere long came another summons to a struggle with the foes of Christianity. The still living knight heard the sound; he could endure no more, he had neither peace nor rest. He caused himself to be lifted on his war-horse; the colour came into his cheeks, and his strength returned to him again as he went forth to battle and to victory. The very same pasha who had yoked him to the plough, became his prisoner, and was dragged to a dungeon in the castle. But an hour had scarcely passed, when the knight stood

before the captive pasha, and inquired, "What do you suppose awaiteth thee?"

"I know," replied the pasha; "retribution."

"Yes; the retribution of a Christian," replied the knight. "The teaching of Christ, the Teacher, commands us to forgive our enemies, to love our neighbours; for God is love. Depart in peace: return to thy home. I give thee back to thy loved ones. But in future be mild and humane to all who are in trouble."

Then the prisoner burst into tears, and exclaimed, "Oh, how could I imagine such mercy and forgiveness! I expected pain and torment. It seemed to me so sure, that I took poison, which I secretly carried about me; and in a few hours its effects will destroy me. I must die! Nothing can save me! But before I die, explain to me the teaching which is so full of love and mercy, so great and God-like. Oh, that I may hear this teaching, and die a Christian!" And his prayer was granted.

This was the legend which the master read out of the old story-book. Every one in the house who was present listened, and shared the pleasure; but Sarah, the Jewish girl, sitting so still in a corner, felt her heart burn with excitement. Great tears came into her shining, dark eyes; and with the same gentle piety with which she had once listened to the gospel while sitting on the form at school, she felt its grandeur now, and the tears rolled down her cheeks. Then the last words of her dying mother rose before her, "Let not my child become a Christian;" and with them sounded in her heart the words of the law, "Honour thy father and thy mother."

"I am not admitted among the Christians," she said; "they mock me as a Jewish girl; the neighbours' boys did so last Sunday when I stood looking in through the open church door at the candles burning on the altar, and listening to the singing. Ever since I sat on the school-bench I have felt the power of Christianity; a power which, like a sunbeam, streams into my heart, however closely I may close my eyes against it. But I will not grieve thee, my mother, in thy grave. I will not be

unfaithful to my father's vow. I will not read the Bible of the Christians. I have the God of my fathers, and in Him I will trust."

And again years passed by. Sarah's master died, and his widow found herself in such reduced circumstances that she wished to dismiss her servant-maid; but Sarah refused to leave the house, and she became a true support in time of trouble, and kept the household together by working till late at night, with her busy hands, to earn their daily bread. Not a relative came forward to assist them, and the widow was confined to a sick bed for months and grew weaker from day to day. Sarah worked hard, but contrived to spare time to amuse her and watch by the sick bed. She was gentle and pious, an angel of blessing in that house of poverty.

"My Bible lies on the table yonder," said the sick woman one day to Sarah. "Read me something from it; the night appears so long, and my spirit thirsts to hear the word of God."

And Sarah bowed her head. She took the book, and folded her hands over the Bible of the Christians, and at last opened it, and read to the sick woman. Tears stood in her eyes as she read, and they shone with brightness, for in her heart it was light.

"Mother," she murmured, "thy child may not receive Christian baptism, nor be admitted into the congregation of Christian people. Thou hast so willed it, and I will respect thy command. We are therefore still united here on earth; but in the next world there will be a higher union, even with God Himself, who leads and guides His people till death. He came down from heaven to earth to suffer for us, that we should bring forth fruits of repentance. I understand it now. I know not how I learnt this truth, unless it is through the name of Christ." Yet she trembled as she pronounced the holy name. She struggled against these convictions of the truth of Christianity for some days, till one evening while watching by her mistress she was suddenly taken very ill; her limbs tottered under her, and she sank fainting by the bedside of the sick woman.

"Poor Sarah," said the neighbours; "she is overcome with hard work and night watching." And then they carried her to

the hospital for the sick poor. There she died; and they bore her to her resting-place in the earth, but not to the churchyard of the Christians. There was no place for the Jewish girl; but they dug a grave for her outside the wall. And God's sun, which shines upon the graves of the Christians, also throws its beams on the grave of the Jewish maiden beyond the wall. And when the psalms of the Christians sound across the churchyard, their echo reaches her lonely resting-place; and she who sleeps there will be counted worthy at the resurrection, through the name of Christ the Lord, who said to His disciples, "John baptized you with water, but I will baptize you with the Holy Ghost."

The Puppet-show Man.

On board a steamer I once met an elderly man, with such a merry face that, if it was really an index of his mind, he must have been the happiest fellow in creation; and indeed he considered himself so, for I heard it from his own mouth. He was a Dane, the owner of a travelling theatre. He had all his company with him in a large box, for he was the proprietor of a puppet-show. His inborn cheerfulness, he said, had been tested by a member of the Polytechnic Institution, and the experiment had made him completely happy. I did not at first understand all this, but afterwards he explained the whole story to me; and here it is:—

"I was giving a representation," he said, "in the hall of the posting-house in the little town of Slagelse; there was a splendid audience, entirely juvenile excepting two respectable matrons. All at once, a person in black, of student-like appearance, entered the room, and sat down; he laughed aloud at the telling points, and applauded quite at the proper time. This was a very unusual spectator for me, and I felt anxious to know who he was. I heard that he was a member of the Polytechnic Institution in Copenhagen, who had been sent out to lecture to the people in

the provinces. Punctually at eight o'clock my performance closed, for children must go early to bed, and a manager must also consult the convenience of the public.

"At nine o'clock the lecturer commenced his lecture and his experiments, and then I formed a part of his audience. It was wonderful both to hear and to see. The greater part of it was beyond my comprehension, but it led me to think that if we men can acquire so much, we must surely be intended to last longer than the little span which extends only to the time when we are hidden away under the earth. His experiments were quite miracles on a small scale, and yet the explanations flowed as naturally as water from his lips. At the time of Moses and the prophets, such a man would have been placed among the sages of the land; in the middle ages they would have burnt him at the stake.

"All night long I could not sleep; and the next evening, when I gave another performance and the lecturer was present, I was in one of my best moods.

"I once heard of an actor, who, when he had to act the part of a lover, always thought of one particular lady in the audience; he only played for her, and forgot all the rest of the house, and now the Polytechnic lecturer was my *she*, my only auditor, for whom alone I played.

"When the performance was over, and the puppets removed behind the curtain, the Polytechnic lecturer invited me into his room to take a glass of wine. He talked of my comedies, and I of his science, and I believe we were both equally pleased. But I had the best of it, for there was much in what he did that he could not always explain to me. For instance, why a piece of iron which is rubbed on a cylinder, should become magnetic. How does this happen? The magnetic spark comes to it,—but how? It is the same with people in the world; they are rubbed about on this spherical globe till the electric spark comes upon them, and then we have a Napoleon, or a Luther, or some one of the kind.

"'The whole world is but a series of miracles,' said the lecturer, 'but we are so accustomed to them that we call them everyday

matters.' And he went on explaining things to me till my skull seemed lifted from my brain, and I declared that were I not such an old fellow, I would at once become a member of the Polytechnic Institution, that I might learn to look at the bright side of everything, although I was one of the happiest of men.

"'One of the happiest!' said the lecturer, as if the idea pleased him; 'are you really happy?'

"'Yes,' I replied; 'for I am welcomed in every town, when I arrive with my company; but I certainly have one wish which sometimes weighs upon my cheerful temper like a mountain of lead. I should like to become the manager of a real theatre, and the director of a real troupe of men and women.'

"'I understand,' he said; 'you would like to have life breathed into your puppets, so that they might be living actors, and you their director. And would you then be quite happy?'

"I said I believed so. But he did not; and we talked it over in all manner of ways, yet could not agree on the subject. However, the wine was excellent, and we clanked our glasses together as we drank. There must have been magic in it, or I should most certainly have become tipsy; but that did not happen, for my mind seemed quite clear; and, indeed, a kind of sunshine filled the room, and beamed from the eyes of the Polytechnic lecturer. It made me think of the old stories of when the gods, in their immortal youth, wandered upon this earth, and paid visits to mankind. I said so to him, and he smiled; and I could have sworn he was one of these ancient deities in disguise, or, at all events, that he belonged to the race of the gods. The result seemed to prove I was right in my suspicions; for it was arranged that my highest wish should be granted, that my puppets were to be gifted with life, and that I was to be the manager of a real company. We drank to my success, and clanked our glasses. Then he packed all my dolls into the box, and fastened it on my back, and I felt as if I were spinning round in a circle, and presently found myself lying on the floor. I remember that quite well. And then the whole company sprang from the box. The spirit had come upon us all; the puppets had become distinguished

actors—at least, so they said themselves—and I was their director.

"When all was ready for the first representation, the whole company requested permission to speak to me before appearing in public. The dancing lady said the house could not be supported unless she stood on one leg; for she was a great genius, and begged to be treated as such. The lady who acted the part of the queen expected to be treated as a queen off the stage, as well as on it, or else she said she should get out of practice. The man whose duty it was to deliver a letter gave himself as many airs as he who took the part of first lover in the piece; he declared that the inferior parts were as important as the great ones, and deserving equal consideration, as parts of an artistic whole. The hero of the piece would only play in a part containing points likely to bring down the applause of the house. The 'prima donna' would only act when the lights were red, for she declared that a blue light did not suit her complexion. It was like a company of flies in a bottle, and I was in the bottle with them; for I was the director. My breath was taken away, my head whirled, and I was as miserable as a man could be. It was quite a novel, strange set of beings among whom I now found myself. I only wished I had them all in my box again, and that I had never been their director. So I told them roundly that, after all, they were nothing but puppets; and then they killed me. After a while I found myself lying on my bed in my room; but how I got there, or how I got away at all from the Polytechnic professor, he may perhaps know, I don't. The moon shone upon the floor, the box lay open, and the dolls were all scattered about in great confusion; but I was not idle. I jumped off the bed, and into the box they all had to go, some on their heads, some on their feet. Then I shut down the lid, and seated myself upon the box. 'Now you'll just have to stay,' said I, 'and I shall be cautious how I wish you flesh and blood again.'

"I felt quite light, my cheerfulness had returned, and I was the happiest of mortals. The Polytechnic professor had fully cured me. I was as happy as a king, and went to sleep on the box.

Next morning—correctly speaking, it was noon, for I slept remarkably late that day—I found myself still sitting there, in happy consciousness that my former wish had been a foolish one. I inquired for the Polytechnic professor ; but he had disappeared like the Greek and Roman gods ; from that time I have been the happiest man in the world. I am a happy director ; for none of my company ever grumble, nor the public either, for I always make them merry. I can arrange my pieces just as I please. I choose out of every comedy what I like best, and no one is offended. Plays that are neglected nowadays by the great public were ran after thirty years ago, and listened to till the tears ran down the cheeks of the audience. These are the pieces I bring forward. I place them before the little ones, who cry over them as papa and mamma used to cry thirty years ago. But I make them shorter, for the youngsters don't like long speeches ; and if they have anything mournful, they like it to be over quickly."

"In the Uttermost Parts of the Sea."

Some years ago, large ships were sent towards the north pole, to explore the distant coasts, and to try how far men could penetrate into these unknown regions. For more than a year one of these ships had been pushing its way northward, amid snow and ice, and the sailors had endured many hardships ; till at length winter set in, and the sun entirely disappeared ; for many weeks there would now be constant night. All around, as far as the eye could reach, nothing could be seen but fields of ice, in which the ship remained stuck fast. The snow lay piled up in great heaps, and of these the sailors made huts, in the form of bee-hives, some of them as large and spacious as one of the "Huns' graves," and others only containing room enough to hold three or four men. It was not quite dark ; the northern lights shot forth red and blue flames, like continuous fireworks, and the snow glittered, and reflected back the light, so that the night here was one long

twilight. When the moon was brightest, the natives came in crowds to see the sailors. They had a very singular appearance in their rough, hairy dresses of fur, and riding in sledges over the ice. They brought with them furs and skins in great abundance, so that the snow-houses were soon provided with warm carpets, and the furs also served for the sailors to wrap themselves in, when they slept under the roofs of snow, while outside it was freezing with a cold far more severe than in the winter with us. In our country it was still autumn, though late in the season ; and they thought of that in their distant exile, and often pictured to themselves the yellow leaves on the trees at home. Their watches pointed to the hours of evening, and time to go to sleep, although in these regions it was now always night.

In one of the huts, two of the men laid themselves down to rest. The younger of these men had brought with him from home his best, his dearest treasure—a Bible, which his grandmother had given him on his departure. Every night the sacred volume rested under his head, and he had known from his childhood what was written in it. Every day he read in the book, and while stretched on his cold couch, the holy words he had learnt would come into his mind : "If I take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Thou art with me, and Thy right hand shall uphold me ; " and under the influence of that faith which these holy words inspired, sleep came upon him, and dreams, which are the manifestations of God to the spirit. The soul lives and acts, while the body is at rest. He felt this life in him, and it was as if he heard the sound of dear, well-known melodies, as if the mild breezes of summer floated around him ; and over his couch shone a ray of brightness, as if it were shining through the covering of his snow-roof. He lifted his head, and saw that the bright gleaming was not the reflection of the glittering snow, but the dazzling brightness of the pinions of a mighty angel, into whose beaming face he was gazing. As from the cup of a lily, the angel rose from amidst the leaves of the Bible ; and, stretching out his arm, the walls of the hut sunk down, as though they had been formed of a light, airy veil of mist, and the green hills and meadows

of home, with its ruddy woods, lay spread around him in the quiet sunshine of a lovely autumn day. The nest of the stork was empty, but ripe fruit still hung on the wild apple-tree, although the leaves had fallen. The red hips gleamed on the hedges, and the starling which hung in the green cage outside the window of the peasant's hut, which was his home, whistled the tune which he had taught him. His grandmother hung green birds'-food around the cage, as he, her grandson, had been accustomed to do. The daughter of the village blacksmith, who was young and fair, stood at the well, drawing water. She nodded to the grandmother, and the old woman nodded to her, and pointed to a letter which had come from a long way off. That very morning the letter had arrived from the cold regions of the north; there, where the absent one was sweetly sleeping under the protecting hand of God. They laughed and wept over the letter; and he, far away, amid ice and snow, under the shadow of the angel's wings, wept and smiled with them in spirit; for he saw and heard it all in his dream. From the letter they read aloud the words of Holy Writ: "In the uttermost parts of the sea, Thy right hand shall uphold me." And as the angel spread his wings like a veil over the sleeper, there was the sound of beautiful music and a hymn. Then the vision fled. It was dark again in the snow-hut; but the Bible still rested beneath his head, and faith and hope dwelt in his heart. God was with him, and he carried home in his heart, even "in the uttermost parts of the sea."

The Marsh King's Daughter.

THE storks relate to their little ones a great many stories, and they are all about moors and reed-banks, and suited to their age and capacity. The youngest of them are quite satisfied with "kribble, krabble," or such nonsense, and think it very grand; but the elder ones want something with a deeper meaning, or at least something about their own family.

We are only acquainted with one of the two longest and oldest stories which the storks relate—it is about Moses, who was exposed by his mother on the banks of the Nile, and was found by the king's daughter, who gave him a good education, and he afterwards became a great man; but where he was buried is still unknown.

Every one knows this story, but not the second; very likely because it is quite an inland story. It has been repeated from mouth to mouth, from one stork-mamma to another, for thousands of years; and each has told it better than the last: and now *we* mean to tell it better than all.

The first stork pair who related it lived at the time it happened, and had their summer residence on the rafters of the Viking's* house, which stood near the wild moorlands of Wendsyssell; that is, to speak more correctly, the great moor-heath, high up in the north of Jutland, by the Skjagen peak. This wilderness is still an immense wild heath of marshy ground, about which we can read in the "Official Directory." It is said that in olden times the place was a lake, the ground of which had heaved up from beneath, and now the moorland extends for miles in every direction, and is surrounded by damp meadows, trembling, undulating swamps, and marshy ground covered with turf, on which grow bilberry bushes and stunted trees. Mists are almost always hovering over this region, which, many years ago, was overrun with wolves. It may well be called the Wild Moor; and one can easily imagine, with such a wild expanse of marsh and lake, how lonely and dreary it must have been a thousand years ago. Many things may be noticed now that existed then. The reeds grow to the same height, and bear the same kind of long, purple-brown leaves, with their feathery tips. There still stands the birch, with its white bark and its delicate, loosely-hanging leaves; and with regard to the living beings who frequented this spot, the fly still wears a gauzy dress of the same cut, and the favourite colours of the stork are white, with black and red for stockings. The people, certainly, in those days, wore very different dresses to those they now wear; but if any of them, be he huntsman or squire, master

* Sea Kings, or pirates of the north.

or servant, ventured on the wavering, undulating, marshy ground of the moor, they met with the same fate a thousand years ago as they would now. The wanderer sank, and went down to the Marsh King, as he is named, who rules in the great moorland empire beneath. They also called him "Gunkel King," but we like the name of "Marsh King" better, and we will give him that name as the storks do. Very little is known of the Marsh King's rule; but that, perhaps, is a good thing.

In the neighbourhood of the moorlands, and not far from the great arm of the North Sea and the Cattegat which is called the Lumfjorden, lay the castle of the Viking, with its water-tight stone cellars, its tower, and its three projecting storeys. On the ridge of the roof the stork had built his nest, and there the stork-mamma sat on her eggs and felt sure her hatching would come to something.

One evening, stork-papa stayed out rather late, and when he came home he seemed quite busy, bustling, and important. "I have something very dreadful to tell you," said he to the stork-mamma.

"Keep it to yourself then," she replied. "Remember that I am hatching eggs; it may agitate me, and will affect them."

"You must know it at once," said he. "The daughter of our host in Egypt has arrived here. She has ventured to take this journey, and now she is lost."

"She who sprung from the race of the fairies, is it?" cried the mother stork. "Oh, tell me all about it; you know I cannot bear to be kept waiting at a time when I am hatching eggs."

"Well, you see, mother," he replied, "she believed what the doctors said, and what I have heard you state also, that the moor-flowers which grow about here would heal her sick father; and she has flown to the north in swan's plumage, in company with some other swan-princesses, who come to these parts every year to renew their youth. She came, and where is she now!"

"You enter into particulars too much," said the mamma stork, "and the eggs may take cold; I cannot bear such suspense as this."

"Well," said he, "I have kept watch; and this evening I went

among the rushes where I thought the marshy ground would bear me, and while I was there three swans came. Something in their manner of flying seemed to say to me, 'Look carefully now; there is one not all swan, only swan's feathers.' You know, mother, you have the same intuitive feeling that I have; you know whether a thing is right or not immediately."

"Yes, of course," said she; "but tell me about the princess; I am tired of hearing about the swan's feathers."

"Well, you know that in the middle of the moor there is something like a lake," said the stork-papa. "You can see the edge of it if you raise yourself a little. Just there, by the reeds and the green banks, lay the trunk of an elder-tree; upon this the three swans stood flapping their wings, and looking about them; one of them threw off her plumage, and I immediately recognised her as one of the princesses of our home in Egypt. There she sat, without any covering but her long, black hair. I heard her tell the two others to take great care of the swan's plumage, while she dipped down into the water to pluck the flowers which she fancied she saw there. The others nodded, and picked up the feather dress, and took possession of it. I wonder what will become of it? thought I, and she most likely asked herself the same question. If so, she received an answer, a very practical one; for the two swans rose up and flew away with her swan's plumage. 'Dive down now!' they cried; 'thou shalt never more fly in the swan's plumage, thou shalt never again see Egypt; here, on the moor, thou wilt remain.' So saying, they tore the swan's plumage into a thousand pieces, the feathers drifted about like a snow-shower, and then the two deceitful princesses flew away."

"Why, this is terrible!" said the stork-mamma. "I feel as if I could hardly bear to hear any more, but you must tell me what happened next."

"The princess wept and lamented aloud; her tears moistened the elder stump, which was really not an elder stump but the Marsh King himself, he who in marshy ground lives and rules. I saw myself how the stump of the tree turned round, and was a tree no more, while long, clammy branches, like arms, were

extended from it. Then the poor child was terribly frightened, and started up to run away. She hastened to cross the green, slimy ground; but it will not bear my weight, much less hers. She quickly sank, and the elder stump dived immediately after her; in fact, it was he who drew her down. Great black bubbles rose up out of the moor-slime, and with these every trace of the two vanished. And now the princess is buried in the wild marsh, she will never now carry flowers to Egypt to cure her father. It would have broken your heart, mother, had you seen it."

"You ought not to have told me," said she, "at such a time as this; the eggs might suffer. But I think the princess will soon find help; some one will rise up to help her. Ah! if it had been you or I, or one of our people, it would have been all over with us."

"I mean to go every day," said he, "to see if anything comes to pass;" and so he did.



"THEY TORE THE SWAN'S PLUMAGE INTO A THOUSAND PIECES." —*p.* 262.

A long time went by, but at last he saw a green stalk shooting up out of the deep, marshy ground. As it reached the surface of the marsh, a leaf spread out, and unfolded itself broader and broader, and close to it came forth a bud.

One morning, when the stork-papa was flying over the stem, he saw that the power of the sun's rays had caused the bud to open, and in the cup of the flower lay a charming child—a little maiden, looking as if she had just come out of a bath. The little one was so like the Egyptian princess, that the stork, at the first moment, thought it must be the princess herself; but after a little reflection he decided that it was much more likely to be the daughter of the princess and the Marsh King; and this explained also her being placed in the cup of a water-lily. "But she cannot be left here," thought the stork, "and in my nest there are already so many. But stay, I have thought of something: the wife of the Viking has no children, and how often she has wished for a little one. People always say the stork brings the little ones; I will do so in earnest this time. I shall fly with the child to the Viking's wife; what rejoicing there will be!"

And then the stork lifted the little girl out of the flower-cup, flew to the castle, picked a hole with his beak in the bladder-covered window, and laid the beautiful child in the bosom of the Viking's wife. Then he flew back quickly to the stork-mamma, and told her what he had seen and done; and the little storks listened to it all, for they were then quite old enough to do so. "So you see," he continued, "that the princess is not dead, for she must have sent her little one up here; and now I have found a home for her."

"Ah, I said it would be so from the first," replied the stork-mamma; "but now think a little of your own family. Our travelling time draws near, and I sometimes feel a little irritation already under the wings. The cuckoo and the nightingale are already gone, and I heard the quails say they should go too as soon as the wind was favourable. Our youngsters will go through all the manœuvres at the review very well, or I am much mistaken in them."

The Viking's wife was above measure delighted when she awoke the next morning and found the beautiful little child lying in her bosom. She kissed it and caressed it; but it cried terribly, and struck out with its arms and legs, and did not seem to be pleased at all. At last it cried itself to sleep; and as it lay there so still and quiet, it was a most beautiful thing to see. The Viking's wife was so delighted, that body and soul were full of joy. Her heart felt so light within her, that it seemed as if her husband and his soldiers, who were absent, must come home as suddenly and unexpectedly as the little child had done. She and her whole household therefore busied themselves in preparing everything for the reception of her lord. The long, coloured tapestry, on which she and her maidens had worked pictures of their idols, Odin, Thor, and Friga, was hung up. The slaves polished the old shields that served as ornaments; cushions were placed on the seats, and dry wood laid on the fireplaces in the centre of the hall, so that the flames might be fanned up at a moment's notice. The Viking's wife herself assisted in the work, so that at night she felt very tired, and quickly fell into a sound sleep. When she awoke, just before morning, she was terribly alarmed to find that the infant had vanished. She sprang from her couch, lighted a pine-chip, and searched all round the room, when, at last, in that part of the bed where her feet had been, lay, not the child, but a great, ugly frog. She was quite disgusted at this sight, and seized a heavy stick to kill the frog; but the creature looked at her with such strange, mournful eyes, that she was unable to strike the blow. Once more she searched round the room; then she started at hearing the frog utter a low, painful croak. She sprang from the couch, and opened the window hastily; at the same moment the sun rose, and threw its beams through the window, till they rested on the couch where the great frog lay. Suddenly it appeared as if the frog's broad mouth contracted, and became small and red. The limbs moved and stretched out and extended themselves till they took a beautiful shape; and behold there was the pretty child lying before her, and the ugly frog was gone. "How is this?" she cried, "have I

had a wicked dream? Is it not my own lovely cherub that lies there." Then she kissed it and fondled it; but the child struggled and fought, and bit as if she had been a little wild cat.

The Viking did not return on that day, nor the next; he was, however, on his way home; but the wind, so favourable to the storks, was against him; for it blew towards the south. A wind in favour of one is often against another.

After two or three days had passed, it became clear to the Viking's wife how matters stood with the child; it was under the power of a terrible sorcerer. By day it was charming in appearance as an angel of light, but with a temper wicked and wild; while at night, in the form of an ugly frog, it was quiet and mournful, with eyes full of sorrow. Here were two natures, changing inwardly and outwardly with the absence and return of sunlight. And so it happened that by day the child, with the actual form of its mother, possessed the fierce disposition of its father; at night, on the contrary, its outward appearance plainly showed its descent on the father's side, while inwardly it had the heart and mind of its mother. Who would be able to loosen this wicked charm which the sorcerer had worked upon it? The wife of the Viking lived in constant pain and sorrow about it. Her heart clung to the little creature, but she could not explain to her husband the circumstances in which it was placed. He was expected to return shortly; and were she to tell him, he would very likely, as was the custom at that time, expose the poor child in the public highway, and let any one take it away who would. The good wife of the Viking could not let that happen, and she therefore resolved that the Viking should never see the child, excepting by daylight.

One morning there sounded a rushing of storks' wings over the roof. More than a hundred pair of storks had rested there during the night, to recover themselves after their excursion; and now they soared aloft, and prepared for the journey southward.

"All the husbands are here, and ready!" they cried; "wives and children also!"

"How light we are!" screamed the young storks in chorus. "Something pleasant seems creeping over us, even down to our

toes, as if we were full of live frogs. Ah, how delightful it is to travel into foreign lands!"

"Hold yourselves properly in the line with us," cried papa and mamma. "Do not use your beaks so much; it tries the lungs." And then the storks flew away.

About the same time sounded the clang of the warriors' trumpets across the heath. The Viking had landed with his men. They were returning home, richly laden with spoil from the Gallic coast, where the people, as did also the inhabitants of Britain, often cried in alarm, "Deliver us from the wild northmen."

Life and noisy pleasure came with them into the castle of the Viking on the moorland. A great cask of mead was drawn into the hall, piles of wood blazed, cattle were slain and served up, that they might feast in reality. The priest who offered the sacrifice sprinkled the devoted prisoners with the warm blood; the fire crackled, and the smoke rolled along beneath the roof; the soot fell upon them from the beams; but they were used to all these things. Guests were invited, and received handsome presents. All wrongs and unfaithfulness were forgotten. They drank deeply, and threw in each other's faces the bones that were left, which was looked upon as a sign of good feeling amongst them. A bard, who was a kind of musician as well as warrior, and who had been with the Viking in his expedition, and knew what to sing about, gave them one of his best songs, in which they heard all their warlike deeds praised, and every wonderful action brought forward with honour. Every verse ended with this refrain,—

"Gold and possessions will flee away,
Friends and foes must die one day;
Every man on earth must die,
But a famous name will never die."

And with that they beat upon their shields, and hammered upon the table with knives and bones, in a most outrageous manner.

The Viking's wife sat upon a raised cross seat in the open hall. She wore a silk dress, golden bracelets, and large amber beads. She was in costly attire, and the bard named her in his song, and

spoke of the rich treasure of gold which she had brought to her husband. Her husband had already seen the wonderfully beautiful child in the daytime, and was delighted with her beauty; even her wild ways pleased him. He said the little maiden would grow up to be a heroine, with the strong will and determination of a man. She would never wink her eyes, even if, in joke, an expert hand should attempt to cut off her eye-brows with a sharp sword.

The full cask of mead soon became empty, and a fresh one was brought in; for these were people who liked plenty to eat and drink. The old proverb, which every one knows, says that "the cattle know when to leave their pasture, but a foolish man knows not the measure of his own appetite." Yes, they all knew this; but men may know what is right, and yet often do wrong. They also knew "that even the welcome guest becomes wearisome when he sits too long in the house." But there they remained; for pork and mead are good things. And so at the Viking's house they stayed, and enjoyed themselves; and at night the bondmen slept in the ashes, and dipped their fingers in the fat, and licked them. Oh, it was a delightful time!

Once more in the same year the Viking went forth, though the storms of autumn had already commenced to roar. He went with his warriors to the coast of Britain; he said that it was but an excursion of pleasure across the water, so his wife remained at home with the little girl. After a while, it is quite certain the foster-mother began to love the poor frog, with its gentle eyes and its deep sighs, even better than the little beauty who bit and fought with all around her.

The heavy, damp mists of autumn, which destroy the leaves of the wood, had already fallen upon forest and heath. Feathers of plucked birds, as they call the snow, flew about in thick showers, and winter was coming. The sparrows took possession of the stork's nest, and conversed about the absent owners in their own fashion; and they, the stork pair and all their young ones, where were they staying now? The storks might have been found in the land of Egypt, where the sun's rays shone forth bright and

warm, as it does here at midsummer. Tamarinds and acacias were in full bloom all over the country, the crescent of Mahomet glittered brightly from the cupolas of the mosques, and on the slender pinnacles sat many of the storks, resting after their long journey. Swarms of them took divided possession of the nests—nests which lay close to each other between the venerable columns, and crowded the arches of temples in forgotten cities. The date and the palm lifted themselves as a screen or as a sun-shade over them. The grey pyramids looked like broken shadows in the clear air and the far-off desert, where the ostrich wheels his rapid flight, and the lion, with his subtle eyes, gazes at the marble sphinx which lies half buried in sand. The waters of the Niles had retreated, and the whole bed of the river was covered with frogs, which was a most acceptable prospect for the stork families. The young storks thought their eyes deceived them, everything around appeared so beautiful.

"It is always like this here, and this is how we live in our warm country," said the stork-mamma; and the thought made her young ones almost beside themselves with pleasure.

"Is there anything more to see?" they asked; "are we going farther into the country?"

"There is nothing further for us to see," answered the stork-mamma. "Beyond this delightful region there are immense forests, where the branches of the trees entwine round each other, while prickly, creeping plants cover the paths, and only an elephant could force a passage for himself with his great feet. The snakes are too large, and the lizards too lively for us to catch. Then there is the desert; if you went there, your eyes would soon be full of sand with the lightest breeze, and if it should blow great guns, you would most likely find yourself in a sand-drift. Here is the best place for you, where there are frogs and locusts; here I shall remain, and so must you." And so they stayed.

The parents sat in the nest on the slender minaret, and rested, yet still were busily employed in cleaning and smoothing their feathers, and in sharpening their beaks against their red stockings; then they would stretch out their necks, salute each other, and

gravely raise their heads with the high-polished forehead, and soft, smooth feathers, while their brown eyes shone with intelligence. The female young ones strutted about amid the moist rushes, glancing at the other young storks and making acquaintances, and swallowing a frog at every third step, or tossing a little snake about with their beaks, in a way they considered very becoming, and besides it tasted very good. The young male storks soon began to quarrel; they struck at each other with their wings, and pecked with their beaks till the blood came. And in this manner many of the young ladies and gentlemen were betrothed to each other: it was, of course, what they wanted, and indeed what they lived for. Then they returned to a nest, and there the quarrelling began afresh; for in hot countries people are almost all violent and passionate. But for all that it was pleasant, especially for the old people, who watched them with great joy: all that their young ones did suited them. Every day here there was sunshine, plenty to eat, and nothing to think of but pleasure. But in the rich castle of their Egyptian host, as they called him, pleasure was not to be found. The rich and mighty lord of the castle lay on his couch, in the midst of the great hall, with its many coloured walls looking like the centre of a great tulip; but he was stiff and powerless in all his limbs, and lay stretched out like a mummy. His family and servants stood round him; he was not dead, although he could scarcely be said to live. The healing moor-flower from the north, which was to have been found and brought to him by her who loved him so well, had not arrived. His young and beautiful daughter who, in swan's plumage, had flown over land and sea to the distant north, had never returned. She is dead, so the two swan-maidens had said when they came home; and they made up quite a story about her, and this is what they told,—

"We three flew away together through the air," said they; "a hunter caught sight of us, and shot at us with an arrow. The arrow struck our young friend and sister, and slowly singing her farewell song she sank down, a dying swan, into the forest lake. On the shores of the lake, under a spreading birch-tree, we laid her

in the cool earth. We had our revenge; we bound fire under the wings of a swallow, who had a nest on the thatched roof of the huntsman. The house took fire, and burst into flames; the hunter was burnt with the house, and the light was reflected over the sea as far as the spreading birch, beneath which we laid her sleeping dust. She will never return to the land of Egypt." And then they both wept. And stork-papa, who heard the story, snapped with his beak so that it might have been heard a long way off.

"Deceit and lies!" cried he; "I should like to run my beak deep into their chests."

"And perhaps break it off," said the mamma stork, "then what a sight you would be. Think first of yourself, and then of your family; all others are nothing to us."

"Yes, I know," said the stork-papa; "but to-morrow I can easily place myself on the edge of the open cupola, when the learned and wise men assemble to consult on the state of the sick man; perhaps they may come a little nearer to the truth." And the learned and wise men assembled together, and talked a great deal on every point; but the stork could make no sense out of anything they said; neither were there any good results from their consultations, either for the sick man, or for his daughter in the marshy heath. When we listen to what people say in this world, we shall hear a great deal; but it is an advantage to know what has been said and done before, when we listen to a conversation. The stork did, and we know at least as much as he, the stork.

"Love is a life-giver. The highest love produces the highest life. Only through love can the sick man be cured." This had been said by many, and even the learned men acknowledged that it was a wise saying.

"What a beautiful thought!" exclaimed the papa stork immediately.

"I don't quite understand it," said the mamma stork, when her husband repeated it; "however, that is not my fault, but the fault of the thought; whatever it may be, I have something else to think of."

Now the learned men had spoken also of love between this

one and that one; of the difference of the love which we have for our neighbour, to the love that exists between parents and children; of the love of the plant for the light, and how the germ springs forth when the sunbeam kisses the ground. All these things were so elaborately and learnedly explained that it was impossible for stork-papa to follow it, much less to talk about it. His thoughts on the subject quite weighed him down; he stood the whole of the following day on one leg, with half-shut eyes, thinking deeply. So much learning was quite a heavy weight for him to carry. One thing, however, the papa stork could understand. Every one, high and low, had from their inmost hearts expressed their opinion that it was a great misfortune for so many thousands of people—the whole country indeed—to have this man so sick, with no hopes of his recovery. And what joy and blessing it would spread around if he could by any means be cured! But where bloomed the flower that could bring him health? They had searched for it everywhere; in learned writings, in the shining stars, in the weather and the wind. Inquiries had been made in every by-way that could be thought of, until at last the wise and learned men had asserted, as we have been already told, that "Love, the life-giver, could alone give new life to a father;" and in saying this, they had overdone it, and said more than they understood themselves. They repeated it, and wrote it down as a recipe, "Love is a life-giver." But how could such a recipe be prepared?—that was a difficulty they could not overcome. At last it was decided that help could only come from the princess herself, whose whole soul was wrapped up in her father, especially as a plan had been adopted by her to enable her to obtain a remedy.

More than a year had passed since the princess had set out at night, when the light of the young moon was soon lost beneath the horizon. She had gone to the marble sphinx in the desert, shaken the sand from her sandals, and then passed through the long passage, which leads to the centre of one of the great pyramids, where the mighty kings of antiquity, surrounded with pomp and splendour, lie veiled in the form of mummies. She had been told by the wise men, that if she laid her head on the breast

of one of them, from the head she would learn where to find life and recovery for her father. She had performed all this, and in a dream had learnt that she must bring home to her father the lotus flower, which grows in the deep sea, near the moors and heath in the Danish land. The very place and situation had been pointed out to her, and she was told that the flower would restore her father to health and strength. And, therefore, she had gone forth from the land of Egypt, flying over to the open marsh and the wild moor in the plumage of a swan.

The papa and mamma storks knew all this, and we also know it now. We know, too, that the Marsh King has drawn her down to himself, and that to the loved ones at home she is for ever dead. One of the wisest of them said, as the stork-mamma also said, "That in some way she would, after all, manage to succeed;" and so at last they comforted themselves with this hope, and would wait patiently; in fact, they could do nothing better.

"I should like to get away the swan's feathers from those two treacherous princesses," said the papa stork; "then, at least, they would not be able to fly over again to the wild moor, and do more wickedness. I can hide the two suits of feathers over yonder, till we find some use for them."

"But where will you put them?" asked the mamma stork.

"In our nest on the moor. I and the young ones will carry them by turns during our flight across; and as we return, should they prove too heavy for us, we shall be sure to find plenty of places on the way in which we can conceal them till our next journey. Certainly one suit of swan's feathers would be enough for the princess, but two are always better. In those northern countries no one can have too many travelling wrappers."

"No one will thank you for it," said stork-mamma; "but you are master; and, excepting at breeding time, I have nothing to say."

In the Viking's castle on the wild moor, to which the storks directed their flight in the following spring, the little maiden still remained. They had named her Helga, which was rather too

soft a name for a child with a temper like hers, although her form was still beautiful. Every month this temper showed itself in sharper outlines; and in the course of years, while the storks still made the same journeys in autumn to the hill, and in spring to the moors, the child grew to be almost a woman, and before any one seemed aware of it, she was a wonderfully beautiful maiden of sixteen. The casket was splendid, but the contents were worthless. She was, indeed, wild and savage, even in those hard, uncultivated times. It was a pleasure to her to splash about with her white hands in the warm blood of the horse which had been slain for sacrifice. In one of her wild moods she bit off the head of the black cock, which the priest was about to slay for the sacrifice. To her foster-father she said one day, "If thine enemy were to pull down thine house about thy ears, and thou shouldst be sleeping in unconscious security, I would not wake thee; even if I had the power I would never do it, for my ears still tingle with the blow that thou gavest me years ago. I have never forgotten it." But the Viking treated her words as a joke; he was, like every one else, bewitched with her beauty, and knew nothing of the change in the form and temper of Helga at night. Without a saddle, she would sit on a horse as if she were a part of it, while it rushed along at full speed; nor would she spring from its back, even when it quarrelled with other horses and bit them. She would often leap from the high shore into the sea with all her clothes on, and swim to meet the Viking, when his boat was steering home towards the shore. She once cut off a long lock of her beautiful hair, and twisted it into a string for her bow. "If a thing is to be done well," said she, "I must do it myself."

The Viking's wife was, for the time in which she lived, a woman of strong character and will; but, compared to her daughter, she was a gentle, timid woman, and she knew that a wicked sorcerer had the terrible child in his power. It was sometimes as if Helga acted from sheer wickedness; for often, when her mother stood on the threshold of the door, or stepped into the yard, she would seat herself on the brink of the well, wave her arms and legs in the air, and suddenly fall right in. Here she

was able, from her frog nature, to dip and dive about in the water of the deep well, until at last she would climb forth like a cat, and come back into the hall dripping with water, so that the green leaves that were strewed on the floor were whirled round, and carried away by the streams that flowed from her.

But there was one time of the day which placed a check upon Helga. It was the evening twilight; when this hour arrived she became quiet and thoughtful, and allowed herself to be advised and led; then also a secret feeling seemed to draw her towards her mother. And as usual, when the sun set, and the transformation took place, both in body and mind, inwards and outwards, she would remain quiet and mournful, with her form shrunk together in the shape of a frog. Her body was much larger than those animals ever are, and on this account it was much more hideous in appearance; for she looked like a wretched dwarf, with a frog's head, and webbed fingers. Her eyes had a most piteous expression; she was without a voice, excepting a hollow, croaking sound, like the smothered sobs of a dreaming child.

Then the Viking's wife took her on her lap, and forgot the ugly form, as she looked into the mournful eyes, and often said, "I could wish that thou wouldst always remain my dumb frog-child, for thou art too terrible when thou art clothed in a form of beauty." And the Viking woman wrote Runic characters against sorcery and spells of sickness, and threw them over the wretched child; but they did no good.

"One can scarcely believe that she was ever small enough to lie in the cup of the water-lily," said the papa stork; "and now she is grown up, and the image of her Egyptian mother, especially about the eyes. Ah, we shall never see her mother again; perhaps she has not discovered how to help herself, as you and the wise men said she would. Year after year have I flown across and across the moor, but there was no sign of her being still alive. Yes, and I may as well tell you that each year, when I arrived a few days before you to repair the nest, and put everything in its place, I have spent a whole night flying here and there over the marshy lake, as if I had been an owl or a bat, but all to no purpose. The

two suits of swan's plumage, which I and the young ones dragged over here from the land of the Nile, are of no use ; trouble enough it was to us to bring them here in three journeys, and now they are lying at the bottom of the nest ; and if a fire should happen to break out, and the wooden house be burnt down, they would be destroyed."

"And our good nest would be destroyed, too," said the mamma stork ; "but you think less of that than of your plumage stuff and your moor-princess. Go and stay with her in the marsh if you like. You are a bad father to your own children, as I have told you already, when I hatched my first brood. I only hope neither we nor our children may have an arrow sent through our wings, shot by that wild girl. Helga does not know in the least what she is about. We have lived in this house longer than she has, she should think of that, and we have never forgotten our duty. We have paid every year our toll of a feather, an egg, and a young one, as it is only right we should do. You don't suppose I can wander about the court-yard, or go everywhere as I used to do in old times. I can do it in Egypt, where I can be a companion of the people, without forgetting myself. But here I cannot go and peep into the pots and kettles as I do there. No, I can only sit up here and feel angry with that girl, the little wretch ; and I am angry with you, too ; you should have left her lying in the water-lily, then no one would have known anything about her."

"You are far better than your conversation," said the papa stork ; "I know you better than you know yourself." And with that he gave a hop, and flapped his wings twice, proudly ; then he stretched his neck and flew, or rather soared away, without moving his outspread wings. He went on for some distance, and then he gave a great flap with his wings and flew on his course at a rapid rate, his head and neck bending proudly before him, while the sun's rays fell on his glossy plumage.

"He is the handsomest of them all," said the mamma stork, as she watched him ; "but I won't tell him so."

Early in the autumn, the Viking again returned home laden with spoil, and bringing prisoners with him. Among them was a

young Christian priest, one of those who contemned the gods of the north. Often lately there had been, both in hall and chamber, a talk of the new faith which was spreading far and wide in the south, and which, through the means of the holy Ansgarius, had already reached as far as Hedeby on the Schlei. Even Helga had heard of this belief in the teachings of One who was named Christ, and who for the love of mankind, and for their redemption, had given up His life. But to her all this had, as it were, gone in at one ear and out of the other. It seemed that she only understood the meaning of the word "love," when in the form of a miserable frog she crouched in the corner of the sleeping chamber; but the Viking's wife had listened to the wonderful story, and had felt herself strangely moved by it.

On their return, after this voyage, the men spoke of the beautiful temples built of polished stone, which had been raised for the public worship of this holy love. Some vessels, curiously formed of massive gold, had been brought home among the booty. There was a peculiar fragrance about them all, for they were incense vessels, which had been swung before the altars in the temples by the Christian priests. In the deep stony cellars of the castle, the young Christian priest was immured, and his hands and feet tied together with strips of bark. The Viking's wife considered him as beautiful as Baldur, and his distress raised her pity; but Helga said he ought to have ropes fastened to his heels, and be tied to the tails of wild animals.

"I would let the dogs loose after them," she said; "over the moor and across the heath. Hurrah! that would be a spectacle for the gods, and better still to follow in its course."

But the Viking would not allow him to die such a death as that, especially as he was the disowner and despiser of the high gods. In a few days, he had decided to have him offered as a sacrifice on the blood-stone in the grove. For the first time, a man was to be sacrificed here. Helga begged to be allowed to sprinkle the assembled people with the blood of the priest. She sharpened her glittering knife; and when one of the great, savage dogs, who were running about the Viking's castle in great numbers,

sprang towards her, she thrust the knife into his side, merely, as she said, to prove its sharpness.

The Viking's wife looked at the wild, badly disposed girl, with great sorrow; and when night came on, and her daughter's beautiful form and disposition were changed, she spoke in eloquent words to Helga of the sorrow and deep grief that was in her heart. The ugly frog, in its monstrous shape, stood before her, and raised its brown, mournful eyes to her face, listening to her words, and seeming to understand them with the intelligence of a human being.

"Never once to my lord and husband has a word passed my lips of what I have to suffer through you; my heart is full of grief about you," said the Viking's wife. "The love of a mother is greater and more powerful than I ever imagined. But love never entered thy heart; it is cold and clammy, like the plants on the moor."

Then the miserable form trembled; it was as if these words had touched an invisible bond between body and soul, for great tears stood in the eyes.

"A bitter time will come for thee at last," continued the Viking's wife; "and it will be terrible for me too. It had been better for thee if thou hadst been left on the high-road, with the cold night wind to lull thee to sleep." And the Viking's wife shed bitter tears, and went away in anger and sorrow, passing under the partition of furs, which hung loose over the beam and divided the hall.

The shrivelled frog still sat in a corner alone. Deep silence reigned around. At intervals, a half-stifled sigh was heard from its inmost soul; it was the soul of Helga. It seemed in pain, as if a new life were arising in her heart. Then she took a step forward and listened; then stepped again forward, and seized with her clumsy hands the heavy bar which was laid across the door. Gently, and with much trouble, she pushed back the bar, as silently lifted the latch, and then took up the glimmering lamp which stood in the antechamber of the hall. It seemed as if a stronger will than her own gave her strength. She removed the

iron bolt from the closed cellar-door, and slipped in to the prisoner. He was slumbering. She touched him with her cold, moist hand, and as he awoke and caught sight of the hideous form, he shuddered as if he beheld a wicked apparition. She drew her knife, cut through the bonds which confined his hands and feet, and beckoned to him to follow her. He uttered some holy names and made the sign of the cross, while the form remained motionless by his side.

"Who art thou?" he asked, "whose outward appearance is that of an animal, while thou willingly performest acts of mercy?"

The frog-figure beckoned to him to follow her, and led him through a long gallery concealed by hanging drapery to the stables, and then pointed to a horse. He mounted upon it, and she sprung up also before him, and held tightly by the animal's mane. The prisoner understood her, and they rode on at a rapid trot, by a road which he would never have found by himself, across the open heath. He forgot her ugly form, and only thought how the mercy and loving-kindness of the Almighty was acting through this hideous apparition. As he offered pious prayers and sang holy songs of praise, she trembled. Was it the effect of prayer and praise that caused this? or, was she shuddering in the cold morning air at the thought of approaching twilight? What were her feelings? She raised herself up, and wanted to stop the horse and spring off, but the Christian priest held her back with all his might, and then sang a pious song, as if this could loosen the wicked charm that had changed her into the semblance of a frog.

And the horse galloped on more wildly than before. The sky painted itself red, the first sunbeam pierced through the clouds, and in the clear flood of sunlight the frog became changed. It was Helga again, young and beautiful, but with a wicked demoniac spirit. He held now a beautiful young woman in his arms, and he was horrified at the sight. He stopped the horse, and sprang from its back. He imagined that some new sorcery was at work. But Helga also leaped from the horse and stood on the ground. The child's short garment reached only to her knee. She snatched the sharp knife from her girdle, and rushed like lightning at the

astonished priest. "Let me get at thee!" she cried; "let me get at thee, that I may plunge this knife into thy body. Thou art pale as ashes, thou beardless slave." She pressed in upon him. They struggled with each other in heavy combat, but it was as if an invisible power had been given to the Christian in the struggle. He held her fast, and the old oak under which they stood seemed to help him, for the loosened roots on the ground became entangled in the maiden's feet, and held them fast. Close by, rose a bubbling spring, and he sprinkled Helga's face and neck with the water, commanded the unclean spirit to come forth, and pronounced upon her a Christian blessing. But the water of faith has no power unless the well-spring of faith flows within. And yet even here its power was shown; something more than the mere strength of a man opposed itself, through his means, against the evil which struggled within her. His holy action seemed to overpower her. She dropped her arms, glanced at him with pale cheeks and looks of amazement. He appeared to her a mighty magician skilled in secret arts; his language was the darkest magic to her, and the movements of his hands in the air were as the secret signs of a magician's wand. She would not have blinked had he waved over her head a sharp knife or a glittering axe; but she shrunk from him as he signed her with the sign of the cross on her forehead and breast, and sat before him like a tame bird, with her head bowed down. Then he spoke to her, in gentle words, of the deed of love she had performed for him during the night, when she had come to him in the form of an ugly frog, to loosen his bands, and to lead him forth to life and light; and he told her that she was bound in closer fetters than he had been, and that she could recover also life and light by his means. He would take her to Hedeby * to St. Ansgarius, and there, in that Christian town, the spell of the sorcerer would be removed. But he would not let her sit before him on the horse, though of her own free will she wished to do so. "Thou must sit behind me, not before me," said he. "Thy magic beauty has a magic power which comes from an evil origin, and I fear it; still I am sure to

* Now the town of Sleswig.

overcome through my faith in Christ." Then he knelt down, and prayed with pious fervour. It was as if the quiet woodland were a holy church consecrated by his worship. The birds sang as if they were also of this new congregation ; and the fragrance of the wild-flowers was as the ambrosial perfume of incense ; while, above all, sounded the words of Scripture, "A light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide their feet into the way of peace." And he spoke these words with the deep longing of his whole nature.

Meanwhile, the horse that had carried them in wild career stood quietly by, plucking at the tall bramble-bushes, till the ripe young berries fell down upon Helga's hands, as if inviting her to eat. Patiently she allowed herself to be lifted on the horse, and sat there like a somnambulist—as one who walked in his sleep. The Christian bound two branches together with bark, in the form of a cross, and held it on high as they rode through the forest. The way gradually grew thicker of brushwood, as they rode along, till at last it became a trackless wilderness. Bushes of the wild sloe here and there blocked up the path, so that they had to ride over them. The bubbling spring formed not a stream, but a marsh, round which also they were obliged to guide the horse ; still there were strength and refreshment in the cool forest breeze, and no trifling power in the gentle words spoken in faith and Christian love by the young priest, whose inmost heart yearned to lead this poor lost one into the way of light and life. It is said that rain-drops can make a hollow in the hardest stone, and the waves of the sea can smooth and round the rough edge of the rocks ; so did the dew of mercy fall upon Helga, softening what was hard, and smoothing what was rough in her character. These effects did not yet appear ; she was not herself aware of them : neither does the seed in the lap of earth know, when the refreshing dew and the warm sunbeams fall upon it, that it contains within itself power by which it will flourish and bloom. The song of the mother sinks into the heart of the child, and the little one prattles the words after her, without understanding their meaning ; but after a time the thoughts expand, and what has

been heard in childhood seems to the mind clear and bright. So now the "Word," which is all-powerful to create, was working in the heart of Helga.

They rode forth from the thick forest, crossed the heath, and again entered a pathless wood. Here, towards evening, they met with robbers.

"Where hast thou stolen that beauteous maiden?" cried the robbers, seizing the horse by the bridle, and dragging the two riders from its back.

The priest had nothing to defend himself with, but the knife he had taken from Helga, and with this he struck out right and left. One of the robbers raised his axe against him; but the young priest sprang on one side, and avoided the blow, which fell with great force on the horse's neck, so that the blood gushed forth, and the animal sunk to the ground. Then Helga seemed suddenly to awake from her long, deep reverie; she threw herself hastily upon the dying animal. The priest placed himself before her, to defend and shelter her; but one of the robbers swung his iron axe against the Christian's head with such force that it was dashed to pieces, the blood and brains were scattered about, and he fell dead upon the ground. Then the robbers seized beautiful Helga by her white arms and slender waist; but at that moment the sun went down, and as its last ray disappeared, she was changed into the form of a frog. A greenish white mouth spread half over her face; her arms became thin and slimy; while broad hands, with webbed fingers, spread themselves out like fans. Then the robbers, in terror, let her go, and she stood among them a hideous monster; and, as is the nature of frogs to do, she hopped up as high as her own size, and disappeared in the thicket. Then the robbers knew that this must be the work of an evil spirit or some secret sorcery, and, in a terrible fright, they ran hastily from the spot.

The full moon had already risen, and was shining in all her radiant splendour over the earth, when from the thicket, in the form of a frog, crept poor Helga. She stood still by the corpse of the Christian priest, and the carcase of the dead horse. She

looked at them with eyes that seemed to weep, and from the frog's head came forth a croaking sound, as when a child bursts into tears. She threw herself first upon one, and then upon the other; brought water in her hand, which, from being webbed, was large and hollow, and poured it over them; but they were dead, and dead they would remain. She understood that at last. Soon wild animals would come and tear their dead bodies; but no, that must not happen. Then she dug up the earth, as deep as she was able, that she might prepare a grave for them. She had nothing but a branch of a tree and her two hands, between the fingers of which the webbed skin stretched, and they were torn by the work, while the blood ran down from them. She saw at last that her work would be useless, more than she could accomplish; so she fetched more water, and washed the face of the dead, and then covered it with fresh green leaves; she also brought large boughs and spread over him, and scattered dried leaves between the branches. Then she brought the heaviest stones that she could carry, and laid them over the dead body, filling up the crevices with moss, till she thought she had fenced in his resting-place strongly enough. The difficult task had employed her the whole night; and as the sun broke forth, there stood the beautiful Helga in all her loveliness, with her bleeding hands, and, for the first time, with tears on her maiden cheeks. It was, in this transformation, as if two natures were striving together within her; her whole frame trembled, and she looked around her as if she had just awoke from a painful dream. She leaned for support against the trunk of a slender tree, and at last climbed to the topmost branches, like a cat, and seated herself firmly upon them. She remained there the whole day, sitting alone, like a frightened squirrel, in the silent solitude of the wood, where the rest and stillness is as the calm of death.

Butterflies fluttered around her, and close by were several ant-hills, each with its hundreds of busy little creatures moving quickly to and fro. In the air, danced myriads of gnats, swarm upon swarm, troops of buzzing flies, ladybirds, dragon flies with golden wings, and other little winged creatures. The worm crawled forth

from the moist ground, and the moles crept out; but, excepting these, all around had the stillness of death: but when people say this, they do not quite understand themselves what they mean. None noticed Helga but a flock of magpies, which flew chattering round the top of the tree on which she sat. These birds hopped close to her on the branches with bold curiosity. A glance from her eyes was a signal to frighten them away, and they were not clever enough to find out who she was; indeed she hardly knew herself.

When the sun was near setting, and the evening's twilight about to commence, the approaching transformation aroused her to fresh exertion. She let herself down gently from the tree; and, as the last sunbeam vanished, she stood again in the wrinkled form of a frog, with the torn, webbed skin on her hands, but her eyes now gleamed with more radiant beauty than they had ever possessed in her most beautiful form of loveliness; they were now pure, mild, maidenly eyes that shone forth in the face of the frog. They showed the existence of deep feeling and a human heart, and the beauteous eyes overflowed with tears, weeping precious drops that lightened the heart.

On the raised mound which she had made as a grave for the dead priest, she found the cross made of the branches of a tree, the last work of him who now lay dead and cold beneath it. A sudden thought came to Helga, and she lifted up the cross and planted it upon the grave, between the stones that covered him and the dead horse. The sad recollection brought the tears to her eyes, and in this gentle spirit she traced the same sign in the sand round the grave; and as she formed, with both her hands, the sign of the cross, the web skin fell from them like a torn glove. She washed her hands in the water of the spring, and gazed with astonishment at their delicate whiteness. Again she made the holy sign in the air, between herself and the dead man; her lips trembled, her tongue moved, and the name which she in her ride through the forest had so often heard spoken, rose to her lips, and she uttered the words, "Jesus Christ." Then the frog-skin fell from her; she was once more a lovely maiden. Her head bent wearily, her tired limbs required rest, and then she slept.

Her sleep, however, was short. Towards midnight she awoke; before her stood the dead horse, prancing and full of life, which shone forth from his eyes and from his wounded neck. Close by his side appeared the murdered Christian priest, more beautiful than Baldur, as the Viking's wife had said; but now he came as if in a flame of fire. Such gravity, such stern justice, such a piercing glance shone from his large, gentle eyes, that it seemed to penetrate into every corner of her heart. Beautiful Helga trembled at the look, and her memory returned with a power as if it had been the day of judgment. Every good deed that had been done for her, every loving word that had been said, were vividly before her mind. She understood now that love had kept her here during the day of her trial; while the creature formed of dust and clay, soul and spirit, had wrestled and struggled with evil. She acknowledged that she had only followed the impulses of an evil disposition, that she had done nothing to cure herself; everything had been given her, and all had happened as if it were by the ordination of Providence. She bowed herself humbly, confessed her great imperfections in the sight of Him who can read every fault of the heart, and then the priest spoke. "Daughter of the moorland, thou hast come from the swamp and the marshy earth, but from this thou shalt arise. The sunlight shining into thy inmost soul proves the origin from which thou hast really sprung, and has restored the body to its natural form. I am come to thee from the land of the dead, and thou also must pass through the valley to reach the holy mountains where mercy and perfection dwell. I cannot lead thee to Hedeby that thou mayst receive Christian baptism, for first thou must remove the thick veil with which the waters of the moorland are shrouded, and bring forth from its depths the living author of thy being and thy life. Till this is done, thou canst not receive consecration."

Then he lifted her on the horse and gave her a golden censer, similar to those she had already seen at the Viking's house. A sweet perfume arose from it, while the open wound in the forehead of the slain priest shone with the rays of a diamond. He took the cross from the grave, and held it aloft, and now they

rode through the air over the rustling trees, over the hills where warriors lay buried each by his dead war-horse; and the brazen monumental figures rose up and galloped forth, and stationed themselves on the summits of the hills. The golden crescent on their foreheads, fastened with golden knots, glittered in the moonlight, and their mantles floated in the wind. The dragon, that guards buried treasure, lifted his head and gazed after them. The goblins and the satyrs peeped out from beneath the hills, and flitted to and fro in the fields, waving blue, red, and green torches, like the glowing sparks in burning paper. Over woodland and heath, flood and fen, they flew on, till they reached the wild moor, over which they hovered in broad circles. The Christian priest held the cross aloft, and it glittered like gold, while from his lips sounded pious prayers. Beautiful Helga's voice joined with his in the hymns he sung, as a child joins in her mother's song. She swung the censer, and a wonderful fragrance of incense arose from it; so powerful, that the reeds and rushes of the moor burst forth into blossom. Each germ came forth from the deep ground: all that had life raised itself. Blooming water-lilies spread themselves forth like a carpet of wrought flowers, and upon them lay a slumbering woman, young and beautiful. Helga fancied that it was her own image she saw reflected in the still water. But it was her mother she beheld, the wife of the Marsh King, the princess from the land of the Nile.

The dead Christian priest desired that the sleeping woman should be lifted on the horse, but the horse sank beneath the load, as if he had been a funeral pall fluttering in the wind. But the sign of the cross made the airy phantom strong, and then the three rode away from the marsh to firm ground.

At the same moment the cock crew in the Viking's castle, and the dream figures dissolved and floated away in the air, but mother and daughter stood opposite to each other.

"Am I looking at my own image in the deep water?" said the mother.

"Is it myself that I see represented on a white shield?" cried the daughter.

Then they came nearer to each other in a fond embrace. The mother's heart beat quickly, and she understood the quickened pulses. "My child!" she exclaimed, "the flower of my heart—my lotus flower of the deep water!" and she embraced her child again and wept, and the tears were as a baptism of new life and love for Helga. "In swan's plumage I came here," said the mother, "and here I threw off my feather dress. Then I sank down through the wavering ground, deep into the marsh beneath, which closed like a wall around me; I found myself after a while in fresher water; still a power drew me down deeper and deeper. I felt the weight of sleep upon my eyelids. Then I slept, and dreams hovered round me. It seemed to me as if I were again in the pyramids of Egypt, and yet the waving elder trunk that had frightened me on the moor stood ever before me. I observed the clefts and wrinkles in the stem; they shone forth in strange



"THEY CAME NEARER TO EACH OTHER IN A FOND EMBRACE."

colours, and took the form of hieroglyphics. It was the mummy case on which I gazed. At last it burst, and forth stepped the thousand years' old king, the mummy form, black as pitch, black as the shining wood-snail, or the slimy mud of the swamp. Whether it was really the mummy or the Marsh King I know not. He seized me in his arms, and I felt as if I must die. When I recovered myself, I found in my bosom a little bird, flapping its wings, twittering and fluttering. The bird flew away from my bosom, upwards towards the dark, heavy canopy above me, but a long, green band kept it fastened to me. I heard and understood the tenor of its longings. Freedom! sunlight! to my father! Then I thought of my father, and the sunny land of my birth, my life, and my love. Then I loosened the band, and let the bird fly away to its home—to a father. Since that hour I have ceased to dream; my sleep has been long and heavy, till in this very hour, harmony and fragrance awoke me, and set me free."

The green band which fastened the wings of the bird to the mother's heart, where did it flutter now? whither had it been wafted? The stork only had seen it. The band was the green stalk, the cup of the flower the cradle in which lay the child, that now in blooming beauty had been folded to the mother's heart.

And while the two were resting in each other's arms, the old stork flew round and round them in narrowing circles, till at length he flew away swiftly to his nest, and fetched away the two suits of swan's feathers, which he had preserved there for many years. Then he returned to the mother and daughter, and threw the swan's plumage over them; the feathers immediately closed around them, and they rose up from the earth in the form of two white swans.

"And now we can converse with pleasure," said the stork-papa; "we can understand one another, although the beaks of birds are so different in shape. It is very fortunate that you came to-night. To-morrow we should have been gone. The mother, myself, and the little ones, we're about to fly to the south. Look at me now: I am an old friend from the Nile, and a mother's heart contains more than her beak. She always said that the

princess would know how to help herself. I and the young ones carried the swan's feathers over here, and I am glad of it now, and how lucky it is that I am here still. When the day dawns we shall start with a great company of other storks. We'll fly first, and you can follow in our track, so that you cannot miss your way. I and the young ones will have an eye upon you."

"And the lotus-flower which I was to take with me," said the Egyptian princess, "is flying here by my side, clothed in swan's feathers. The flower of my heart will travel with me; and so the riddle is solved. Now for home! now for home!"

But Helga said she could not leave the Danish land without once more seeing her foster-mother, the loving wife of the Viking. Each pleasing recollection, each kind word, every tear from the heart which her foster-mother had wept for her, rose in her mind, and at that moment she felt as if she loved this mother the best.

"Yes, we must go to the Viking's castle," said the stork; "mother and the young ones are waiting for me there. How they will open their eyes and flap their wings! My wife, you see, does not say much; she is short and abrupt in her manner; but she means well, for all that. I will flap my wings at once, that they may hear us coming." Then stork-papa flapped his wings in first-rate style, and he and the swans flew away to the Viking's castle.

In the castle, every one was in a deep sleep. It had been late in the evening before the Viking's wife retired to rest. She was anxious about Helga, who, three days before, had vanished with the Christian priest. Helga must have helped him in his flight, for it was her horse that was missed from the stable; but by what power had all this been accomplished? The Viking's wife thought of it with wonder, thought on the miracles which they said could be performed by those who believed in the Christian faith, and followed its teachings. These passing thoughts formed themselves into a vivid dream, and it seemed to her that she was still lying awake on her couch, while without darkness reigned. A storm arose; she heard the lake dashing and rolling from east and west, like the waves of the North Sea or the Cattegat. The monstrous

snake which, it is said, surrounds the earth in the depths of the ocean, was trembling in spasmodic convulsions. The night of the fall of the gods was come, "Ragnarok," as the heathens call the judgment-day, when everything shall pass away, even the high gods themselves. The war-trumpet sounded; riding upon the rainbow, came the gods, clad in steel, to fight their last battle on the last battle-field. Before them flew the winged vampires, and the dead warriors closed up the train. The whole firmament was ablaze with the northern lights, and yet the darkness triumphed. It was a terrible hour. And, close to the terrified woman, Helga seemed to be seated on the floor, in the hideous form of a frog, yet trembling, and clinging to her foster-mother, who took her on her lap, and lovingly caressed her, hideous and frog-like as she was. The air was filled with the clashing of arms and the hissing of arrows, as if a storm of hail was descending upon the earth. It seemed to her the hour when earth and sky would burst asunder, and all things be swallowed up in Saturn's fiery lake; but she knew that a new heaven and a new earth would arise, and that corn-fields would wave where now the lake rolled over desolate sands, and the ineffable God reign. Then she saw rising from the region of the dead, Baldur the gentle, the loving, and as the Viking's wife gazed upon him, she recognised his countenance. It was the captive Christian priest. "White Christian!" she exclaimed aloud, and with the words, she pressed a kiss on the forehead of the hideous frog-child. Then the frog-skin fell off, and Helga stood before her in all her beauty, more lovely and gentle-looking, and with eyes beaming with love. She kissed the hands of her foster-mother, blessed her for all her fostering love and care during the days of her trial and misery, for the thoughts she had suggested and awoke in her heart, and for naming the Name which she now repeated. Then beautiful Helga rose as a mighty swan, and spread her wings with the rushing sound of troops of birds of passage flying through the air.

Then the Viking's wife awoke, but she still heard the rushing sound without. She knew it was the time for the storks to depart, and that it must be their wings which she heard. She felt she

should like to see them once more, and bid them farewell. She rose from her couch, stepped out on the threshold, and beheld, on the ridge of the roof, a party of storks ranged side by side. Troops of the birds were flying in circles over the castle and the highest trees; but just before her, as she stood on the threshold and close to the well where Helga had so often sat and alarmed her with her wildness, now stood two swans, gazing at her with intelligent eyes. Then she remembered her dream, which still appeared to her as a reality. She thought of Helga in the form of a swan. She thought of the Christian priest, and suddenly a wonderful joy arose in her heart. The swans flapped their wings and arched their necks as if to offer her a greeting, and the Viking's wife spread out her arms towards them, as if she accepted it, and smiled through her tears. She was roused from deep thought by a rustling of wings and snapping of beaks; all the storks arose, and started on their journey towards the south.

"We will not wait for the swans," said the mamma stork; "if they want to go with us, let them come now; we can't sit here till the plovers start. It is a fine thing after all to travel in families, not like the finches and the partridges. There the male and the female birds fly in separate flocks, which, to speak candidly, I consider very unbecoming."

"What are those swans flapping their wings in that way for?"

"Well, every one flies in his own fashion," said the papa stork. "The swans fly in an oblique line; the cranes, in the form of a triangle; and the plovers, in a curved line like the snake."

"Don't talk about snakes while we are flying up here," said stork-mamma. "It puts ideas into the children's heads that cannot be realised."

"Are those the high mountains I have heard spoken of?" asked Helga, in a swan's plumage.

"They are storm-clouds driving along beneath us," replied her mother.

"What are yonder white clouds that rise so high?" again inquired Helga.

"Those are mountains covered with perpetual snows, that you

see yonder," said her mother. And then they flew across the Alps towards the blue Mediterranean.

"Africa's land! Egyptia's strand!" sang the daughter of the Nile, in her swan's plumage, as from the upper air she caught sight of her native land, a narrow, golden, wavy strip on the shores of the Nile; the other birds espied it also and hastened their flight.

"I can smell the Nile mud and the wet frogs," said the stork-mamma, "and I begin to feel quite hungry. Yes, now you shall taste something nice, and you will see the marabout bird, and the ibis, and the crane. They all belong to our family, but they are not nearly so handsome as we are. They give themselves great airs, especially the ibis. The Egyptians have spoilt him. They make a mummy of him, and stuff him with spices. I would rather be stuffed with live frogs, and so would you, and so you shall. Better have something in your inside while you are alive, than to be made a parade of after you are dead. That is my opinion, and I am always right."

"The storks are come," was said in the great house on the banks of the Nile, where the lord lay in the hall on his downy cushions, covered with a leopard skin, scarcely alive, yet not dead, waiting and hoping for the lotus-flower from the deep moorland in the far north. Relatives and servants were standing by his couch, when the two beautiful swans who had come with the storks flew into the hall. They threw off their soft white plumage, and two lovely female forms appeared, as like each other as two dew-drops. They approached the pale, sick old man, and threw back their long hair, and when Helga bent over her grandfather, redness came back to his cheeks, his eyes brightened, and life returned to his benumbed limbs. The old man rose up with health and energy renewed; daughter and grandchild welcomed him as joyfully as if with a morning greeting after a long and troubled dream.

Joy reigned through the whole house, as well as in the storks' nest; although there the chief cause was really the good food, especially the quantities of frogs, which seemed to spring out of the ground in swarms.

Then the learned men hastened to note down, in flying characters, the story of the two princesses, and spoke of the arrival of the health-giving flower as a mighty event, which had been a blessing to the house and the land. Meanwhile, the stork-papa told the story to his family in his own way; but not till they had eaten and were satisfied; otherwise they would have had something else to do than to listen to stories.

"Well," said the stork-mamma, when she had heard it, "you will be made something of at last; I suppose they can do nothing less."

"What could I be made?" said stork-papa; "what have I done?—just nothing."

"You have done more than all the rest," she replied. "But for you and the youngsters the two young princesses would never have seen Egypt again, and the recovery of the old man would not have been effected. You will become something. They must certainly give you a doctor's hood, and our young ones will inherit it, and their children after them, and so on. You already look like an Egyptian doctor, at least in my eyes."

"I cannot quite remember the words I heard when I listened on the roof," said stork-papa, while relating the story to his family; "all I know is, that what the wise men said was so complicated and so learned, that they received not only rank, but presents: even the head cook at the great house was honoured with a mark of distinction, most likely for the soup."

"And what did you receive?" said the stork-mamma. "They certainly ought not to forget the most important person in the affair, as you really are. The learned men have done nothing at all but use their tongues. Surely they will not overlook you."

Late in the night, while the gentle sleep of peace rested on the now happy house, there was still one watcher. It was not stork-papa, who, although he stood on guard on one leg, could sleep soundly. Helga alone was awake. She leaned over the balcony, gazing at the sparkling stars that shone clearer and brighter in the pure air than they had done in the north, and yet they were

the same stars. She thought of the Viking's wife in the wild moorland, of the gentle eyes of her foster-mother, and of the tears she had shed over the poor frog-child that now lived in splendour and starry beauty by the waters of the Nile, with air balmy and sweet as spring. She thought of the love that dwelt in the breast of the heathen woman, love that had been shown to a wretched creature, hateful as a human being, and hideous when in the form of an animal. She looked at the glittering stars, and thought of the radiance that had shone forth on the forehead of the dead man, as she had fled with him over the woodland and moor. Tones were awakened in her memory; words which she had heard him speak as they rode onward, when she was carried, wondering and trembling, through the air; words from the great Fountain of love, the highest love that embraces all the human race. What had not been won and achieved by this love?

Day and night beautiful Helga was absorbed in the contemplation of the great amount of her happiness, and lost herself in the contemplation, like a child who turns hurriedly from the giver to examine the beautiful gifts. She was overpowered with her good fortune, which seemed always increasing, and therefore what might it become in the future? Had she not been brought by a wonderful miracle to all this joy and happiness? And in these thoughts she indulged, until at last she thought no more of the Giver. It was the over-abundance of youthful spirits unfolding its wings for a daring flight. Her eyes sparkled with energy, when suddenly arose a loud noise in the court below, and the daring thought vanished. She looked down, and saw two large ostriches running round quickly in narrow circles; she had never seen these creatures before,—great, coarse, clumsy-looking birds with curious wings that looked as if they had been clipped, and the birds themselves had the appearance of having been roughly used. She inquired about them, and for the first time heard the legend which the Egyptians relate respecting the ostrich.

Once, say they, the ostriches were a beautiful and glorious race of birds, with large, strong wings. One evening the other large birds of the forest said to the ostrich, "Brother, shall we fly to

the river to-morrow morning to drink, *God willing?*" and the ostrich answered, "I will."

With the break of day, therefore, they commenced their flight; first rising high in the air, towards the sun, which is the eye of God; still higher and higher the ostrich flew, far above the other birds, proudly approaching the light, trusting in its own strength, and thinking not of the Giver, or saying, "*if God will.*" When suddenly the avenging angel drew back the veil from the flaming ocean of sunlight, and in a moment the wings of the proud bird were scorched and shrivelled, and it sunk miserably to the earth. Since that time the ostrich and his race have never been able to rise in the air; they can only fly terror-stricken along the ground, or run round and round in narrow circles. It is a warning to mankind, that in all our thoughts and schemes, and in every action we undertake, we should say, "*if God will.*"

Then Helga bowed her head thoughtfully and seriously, and looked at the circling ostrich, as with timid fear and simple pleasure it glanced at its own great shadow on the sunlit walls. And the story of the ostrich sunk deeply into the heart and mind of Helga: a life of happiness, both in the present and in the future, seemed secure for her, and what was yet to come might be the best of all, *God willing.*

Early in the spring, when the storks were again about to journey northward, beautiful Helga took off her golden bracelets, scratched her name on them, and beckoned to the stork-father. He came to her, and she placed the golden circlet round his neck, and begged him to deliver it safely to the Viking's wife, so that she might know that her foster-daughter still lived, was happy, and had not forgotten her.

"It is rather heavy to carry," thought stork-papa, when he had it on his neck; "but gold and honour are not to be flung into the street. The stork brings good fortune—they'll be obliged to acknowledge that at last."

"You lay gold, and I lay eggs," said stork-mamma; "with you it is only once in a way, I lay eggs every year. But no one appreciates what we do; I call it very mortifying."

"But then we have a consciousness of our own worth, mother," replied stork-papa.

"What good will that do you?" retorted stork-mamma; "it will neither bring you a fair wind, nor a good meal."

"The little nightingale, who is singing yonder in the tamarind grove, will soon be going north, too." Helga said she had often heard her singing on the wild moor, so she determined to send a message by her. While flying in the swan's plumage she had learnt the bird language; she had often conversed with the stork and the swallow, and she knew that the nightingale would understand. So she begged the nightingale to fly to the beechwood, on the peninsula of Jutland, where a mound of stones and twigs had been raised to form the grave, and she begged the nightingale to persuade all the other little birds to build their nests round the place, so that evermore should resound over that grave music and song. And the nightingale flew away, and time flew away also.

In the autumn, an eagle, standing upon a pyramid, saw a stately train of richly laden camels, and men attired in armour on foaming Arabian steeds, whose glossy skins shone like silver, their nostrils were pink, and their thick, flowing manes hung almost to their slender legs. A royal prince of Arabia, handsome as a prince should be, and accompanied by distinguished guests, was on his way to the stately house, on the roof of which the storks' empty nests might be seen. They were away now in the far north, but expected to return very soon. And, indeed, they returned on a day that was rich in joy and gladness.

A marriage was being celebrated, in which the beautiful Helga, glittering in silk and jewels, was the bride, and the bridegroom the young Arab prince. Bride and bridegroom sat at the upper end of the table, between the bride's mother and grandfather. But her gaze was not on the bridegroom, with his manly, sunburnt face, round which curled a black beard, and whose dark fiery eyes were fixed upon her; but away from him, at a twinkling star, that shone down upon her from the sky. Then was heard the sound of rushing wings beating the air. The storks were coming home; and the old stork pair, although tired with the

journey and required rest, did not fail to fly down at once to the balustrades of the verandah, for they knew already what feast was being celebrated. They had heard of it on the borders of the land, and also that Helga had caused their figures to be represented on the walls, for they belonged to her history.

"I call that very sensible and pretty," said stork-papa.

"Yes, but it is very little," said mamma stork; "they could not possibly have done less."

But, when Helga saw them, she rose and went out into the verandah to stroke the backs of the storks. The old stork pair bowed their heads, and curved their necks, and even the youngest among the young ones felt highly honoured by this reception.

Helga continued to gaze upon the glittering star, which seemed to glow brighter and purer in its light; then between herself and the star floated a form, purer than the air, and visible through it. It floated quite near to her, and she saw that it was the dead Christian priest, who also was coming to her wedding feast—coming from the heavenly kingdom.

"The glory and brightness, yonder, outshines all that is known on earth," said he.

Then Helga the fair prayed more gently, and more earnestly, than she had ever prayed in her life before, that she might be permitted to gaze, if only for a single moment, at the glory and brightness of the heavenly kingdom. Then she felt herself lifted up, as it were, above the earth, through a sea of sound and thought; not only around her, but within her, was there light and song, such as words cannot express.

"Now we must return," he said; "you will be missed."

"Only one more look," she begged; "but one short moment more."

"We must return to earth; the guests will have all departed. Only one more look!—the last!"

Then Helga stood again in the verandah. But the marriage lamps in the festive hall had been all extinguished, and the torches outside had vanished. The storks were gone; not a guest could be seen; no bridegroom—all in those few short moments

seemed to have died. Then a great dread fell upon her. She stepped from the verandah through the empty hall into the next chamber, where slept strange warriors. She opened a side door, which once led into her own apartment, but now, as she passed through, she found herself suddenly in a garden which she had never before seen here. The sky blushed red, it was the dawn of morning. Three minutes only in heaven, and a whole night on earth had passed away! Then she saw the storks, and called to them in their own language.

Then stork-papa turned his head towards her, listened to her words, and drew near. "You speak our language," said he, "what do you wish? Why do you appear,—you—a strange woman?"

"It is I—it is Helga! Dost thou not know me? Three minutes ago we were speaking together yonder in the verandah."

"That is a mistake," said the stork, "you must have dreamed all this."

"No, no," she exclaimed. Then she reminded him of the Viking's castle, of the great lake, and of the journey across the Ocean.

Then stork-papa winked his eyes, and said, "Why that's an old story which happened in the time of my grandfather. There certainly was a princess of that kind here in Egypt once, who came from the Danish land, but she vanished on the evening of her wedding day, many hundred years ago, and never came back. You may read about it yourself yonder, on a monument in the garden. There you will find swans and storks sculptured, and on the top is a figure of the princess Helga, in marble."

And so it was; Helga understood it all now, and sank on her knees. The sun burst forth in all his glory, and, as in olden times, the form of the frog vanished in his beams, and the beautiful form stood forth in all its loveliness; so now, bathed in light, rose a beautiful form, purer, clearer than air—a ray of brightness—from the Source of light Himself. The body crumbled into dust, and a faded lotus-flower lay on the spot on which Helga had stood.

"Now that is a new ending to the story," said stork-papa; "I

really never expected it would end in this way, but it seems a very good ending."

"And what will the young ones say to it, I wonder?" said stork-mamma.

"Ah, that is a very important question," replied the stork.

The Garden of Paradise.

THERE was once a king's son who had a larger and more beautiful collection of books than any one else in the world, all full of splendid copper-plate engravings. He could read and obtain information respecting every people of every land; but not a word could he find to explain the situation of the garden of paradise, and this was just what he most wished to know. His grandmother had told him, when he was quite a little boy, just old enough to go to school, that each flower in the garden of paradise was a sweet cake, that the pistils were full of rich wine, that on one flower history was written, on another geography or tables; so those who wished to learn their lessons had only to eat some of the cakes, and the more they ate, the more history, geography, or tables they knew. He believed it all then; but as he grew older, and learnt more and more, he became wise enough to understand that the splendour of the garden of paradise must be very different to all this. "Oh, why did Eve pluck the fruit from the tree of knowledge? why did Adam eat the forbidden fruit?" thought the king's son: "if I had been there it would never have happened, and there would have been no sin in the world." The garden of paradise occupied all his thoughts till he reached his seventeenth year.

One day he was walking alone in the wood, which was his greatest pleasure, when evening came on. The clouds gathered, and the rain poured down as if the sky had been a waterspout; and it was as dark as the bottom of a well at midnight: sometimes he slipped over the smooth grass, or fell over stones that projected

out of the rocky ground. Everything was dripping with moisture, and the poor prince had not a dry thread about him. He was obliged at last to climb over great blocks of stone, with water spirting from the thick moss. He began to feel quite faint, when he heard a most singular rushing noise, and saw before him a large cave, from which came a blaze of light. In the middle of the cave an immense fire was burning, and a noble stag, with its branching horns, was placed on a spit between the trunks of two pine-trees. It was turning slowly before the fire, and an elderly woman, as large and strong as if she had been a man in disguise, sat by, throwing one piece of wood after another into the flames.

"Come in," she said to the prince; "sit down by the fire, and dry yourself."

"There is a great draught here," said the prince, as he seated himself on the ground.

"It will be worse when my sons come home," replied the woman; "you are now in the cavern of the Winds, and my sons are the four Winds of heaven: can you understand that?"

"Where are your sons?" asked the prince.

"It is difficult to answer stupid questions," said the woman. "My sons have plenty of business on hand; they are playing at shuttlecock with the clouds up yonder in the king's hall," and she pointed upwards.

"Oh, indeed," said the prince; "but you speak more roughly and harshly, and are not so gentle as the women I am used to."

"Yes, that is because they have nothing else to do; but I am obliged to be harsh, to keep my boys in order, and I can do it, although they are so headstrong. Do you see those four sacks hanging on the wall? Well, they are just as much afraid of those sacks, as you used to be of the rat behind the looking-glass. I can bend the boys together, and put them in the sacks without any resistance on their parts, I can tell you. There they stay, and dare not attempt to come out until I allow them to do so. And here comes one of them."

It was the North Wind who came in, bringing with him a

cold, piercing blast; large hailstones rattled on the floor, and snowflakes were scattered around in all directions. He wore a bearskin dress and cloak. His sealskin cap was drawn over his ears, long icicles hung from his beard, and one hailstone after another rolled from the collar of his jacket.



"IT WAS THE NORTH WIND WHO CAME IN."—*p.* 300.

"Don't go too near the fire," said the prince, "or your hands and face will be frost-bitten."

"Frost-bitten!" said the North Wind, with a loud laugh; "why, frost is my greatest delight. What sort of a little snip are you? and how did you find your way to the cavern of the Winds?"

"He is my guest," said the old woman, "and if you are not satisfied with that explanation you can go into the sack. Do you understand me?"

That settled the matter. So the North Wind began to relate his adventures, whence he came, and where he had been for a whole month. "I come from the polar seas," he said; "I have been on the Bear's Island with the Russian walrus-hunters. I sat and slept at the helm of their ship, as they sailed away from North Cape. Sometimes when I woke, the storm-birds would fly about my legs. They are curious

birds; they give one flap with their wings, and then on their outstretched pinions soar far away."

"Don't make such a long story of it," said the mother of the winds; "what sort of a place is Bear's Island?"

"A very beautiful place, with a floor for dancing as smooth and flat as a plate. Half-melted snow, partly covered with moss, sharp stones, and skeletons of walruses and polar-bears, lie all about, their gigantic limbs in a state of green decay. It would seem as if the sun never shone there. I blew gently, to clear away the mist, and then I saw a little hut, which had been built from the wood of a wreck, and was covered with the skins of the walrus, the fleshy side outwards; it looked green and red, and on the roof sat a growling bear. Then I went to the seashore, to look after birds' nests, and saw the unfledged nestlings opening their mouths and screaming for food. I blew into the thousand little throats, and quickly stopped their screaming. Farther on were the walruses with pig's heads, and teeth a yard long, rolling about like great worms."

"You relate your adventures very well, my son," said the mother, "it makes my mouth water to hear you."

"After that," continued the North Wind, "the hunting commenced. The harpoon was flung into the breast of the walrus, so that a smoking stream of blood spirted forth like a fountain, and besprinkled the ice. Then I thought of my own game; I began to blow, and set my own ships, the great icebergs sailing, so that they might crush the boats. Oh, how the sailors howled and cried out! but I howled louder than they. They were obliged to unload their cargo, and throw their chests and the dead walruses on the ice. Then I sprinkled snow over them, and left them in their crushed boats to drift southward, and to taste salt water. They will never return to Bear's Island."

"So you have done mischief," said the mother of the Winds.

"I shall leave others to tell the good I have done," he replied. "But here comes my brother from the West; I like him best of all, for he has the smell of the sea about him, and brings in a cold, fresh air as he enters."

"Is that the little Zephyr?" asked the prince.

"Yes, it is the Zephyr," said the old woman; "but he is not little now. In years gone by he was a beautiful boy; now that is all past."

He came in, looking like a wild man, and he wore a slouched hat to protect his head from injury. In his hand he carried a club, cut from a mahogany tree in the American forests; not a trifle to carry.

"Whence do you come?" asked the mother.

"I come from the wilds of the forests, where the thorny brambles form thick hedges between the trees; where the water-snake lies in the wet grass, and mankind seem to be unknown."

"What were you doing there?"

"I looked into the deep river, and saw it rushing down from the rocks. The water-drops mounted to the clouds and glittered in the rainbow. I saw the wild buffalo swimming in the river, but the stong tide carried him away amidst a flock of wild ducks, which flew into the air as the waters dashed onwards, leaving the buffalo to be hurled over the waterfall. This pleased me; so I raised a storm, which rooted up old trees, and sent them floating down the river."

"And what else have you done?" asked the old woman.

"I have rushed wildly across the savannahs; I have stroked the wild horses, and shaken the cocoa-nuts from the trees. Yes, I have many stories to relate; but I need not tell everything I know. You know it all very well, don't you, old lady?" And he kissed his mother so roughly, that she nearly fell backwards. Oh, he was, indeed, a wild fellow.

Now in came the South Wind, with a turban and a flowing Bedouin cloak.

"How cold it is here!" said he, throwing more wood on the fire. "It is easy to feel that the North Wind has arrived here before me."

"Why, it is hot enough here to roast a bear," said the North Wind.

"You are a bear yourself," said the other.

"Do you want to be put in the sack, both of you?" said the

old woman. "Sit down, now, on that stone, yonder, and tell me where you have been."

"In Africa, mother. I went out with the Hottentots, who were lion-hunting in the Kaffir land, where the plains are covered with grass the colour of a green olive; and here I ran races with the ostrich, but I soon outstripped him in swiftness. At last I came to the desert, in which lie the golden sands, looking like the bottom of the sea. Here I met a caravan, and the travellers had just killed their last camel, to obtain water; there was very little for them, and they continued their painful journey beneath the burning sun, and over the hot sands, which stretched before them a vast, boundless desert. Then I rolled myself in the loose sand, and whirled it in burning columns over their heads. The dromedaries stood still in terror, while the merchants drew their caftans over their heads, and threw themselves on the ground before me, as they do before Allah, their god. Then I buried them beneath a pyramid of sand, which covers them all. When I blow that away on my next visit, the sun will bleach their bones, and travellers will see that others have been there before them; otherwise, in such a wild desert, they might not believe it possible."

"So you have done nothing but evil," said the mother. "Into the sack with you;" and, before he was aware, she had seized the South Wind round the body, and popped him into the bag. He rolled about on the floor, till she sat herself upon him to keep him still.

"These boys of yours are very lively," said the prince.

"Yes," she replied, "but I know how to correct them, when necessary; and here comes the fourth." In came the East Wind, dressed like a Chinese.

"Oh, you come from that quarter, do you?" said she; "I thought you had been to the garden of paradise."

"I am going there to-morrow," he replied; "I have not been there for a hundred years. I have just come from China, where I danced round the porcelain tower till all the bells jingled again. In the streets an official flogging was taking place, and bamboo canes were being broken on the shoulders of men of very high

position, from the first to the ninth grade. They cried, 'Many thanks, my fatherly benefactor;' but I am sure the words did not come from their hearts, so I rang the bells till they sounded, 'ding, ding-dong.'"

"You are a wild boy," said the old woman; "it is well for you that you are going to-morrow to the garden of paradise; you always get improved in your education there. Drink deeply from the fountain of wisdom while you are there, and bring home a bottleful for me."

"That I will," said the East Wind; "but why have you put my brother South in a bag? Let him out; for I want him to tell me all about the phœnix bird. The princess always wants to hear of this bird when I pay her my visit every hundred years. If you will open the sack, sweetest mother, I will give you two pocketfuls of tea, green and fresh as when I gathered it from the spot where it grew."

"Well, for the sake of the tea, and because you are my own boy, I will open the bag."

She did so, and the South Wind crept out, looking quite cast down, because the prince had seen his disgrace.

"There is a palm-leaf for the princess," he said. "The old phœnix, the only one in the world, gave it to me himself. He has scratched on it with his beak the whole of his history during the hundred years he has lived. She can there read how the old phœnix set fire to his own nest, and sat upon it while it was burning, like a Hindoo widow. The dry twigs around the nest crackled and smoked till the flames burst forth and consumed the phœnix to ashes. Amidst the fire lay an egg, red hot, which presently burst with a loud report, and out flew a young bird. He is the only phœnix in the world, and the king over all the other birds. He has bitten a hole in the leaf which I gave you, and that is his greeting to the princess.

"Now let us have something to eat," said the mother of the Winds. So they all sat down to feast on the roasted stag; and as the prince sat by the side of the East Wind, they soon became good friends.

"Pray tell me," said the prince, "who is that princess of whom you have been talking? and where lies the garden of paradise?"

"Ho! ho!" said the East Wind, "would you like to go there? Well, you can fly off with me to-morrow; but I must tell you one thing—no human being has been there since the time of Adam and Eve. I suppose you have read of them in your Bible."

"Of course I have," said the prince.

"Well," continued the East Wind, "when they were driven out of the garden of paradise, it sunk into the earth; but it retained its warm sunshine, its balmy air, and all its splendour. The fairy queen lives there, in the island of happiness, where death never comes, and all is beautiful. I can manage to take you there to-morrow, if you will sit on my back. But now don't talk any more, for I want to go to sleep;" and then they all slept.

When the prince awoke in the early morning, he was not a little surprised at finding himself high up above the clouds. He was seated on the back of the East Wind, who held him faithfully; and they were so high in the air that woods and fields, rivers and lakes, as they lay beneath them, looked like a painted map.

"Good morning," said the East Wind. "You might have slept on a while; for there is very little to see in the flat country over which we are passing, unless you like to count the churches; they look like spots of chalk on a green board." The green board was the name he gave to the green fields and meadows.

"It was very rude of me not to say good-bye to your mother and your brothers," said the prince.

"They will excuse you, as you were asleep," said the East Wind; and then they flew on faster than ever.

The leaves and branches of the trees rustled as they passed. When they flew over seas and lakes, the waves rose higher, and the large ships dipped intothe water like diving swans. As darkness came on, towards evening, the great towns looked charming; lights were sparkling, now seen, now hidden, just as the sparks

go out one after another on a piece of burnt paper. The prince clapped his hands with pleasure ; but the East Wind advised him not to express his admiration in that manner, or he might fall down, and find himself hanging on a church steeple. The eagle in the dark forests flies swiftly ; but faster than he flew the East Wind. The Cossack, on his small horse, rides lightly o'er the plains ; but lighter still passed the prince on the wings of the wind.

"There are the Himalayas, the highest mountains in Asia," said the East Wind. "We shall soon reach the garden of paradise now."

Then they turned southward, and the air became fragrant with the perfume of spices and flowers. Here figs and pomegranates grew wild, and the vines were covered with clusters of blue and purple grapes. Here they both descended to the earth, and stretched themselves on the soft grass, while the flowers bowed to the breath of the wind as if to welcome it. "Are we now in the garden of paradise ?" asked the prince.

"No indeed," replied the East Wind ; "but we shall be there very soon. Do you see that wall of rocks, and the cavern beneath it, over which the grape vine hangs like a green curtain ? Through that cavern we must pass. Wrap your cloak round you ; for while the sun scorches you here, a few steps farther it will be icy cold. The bird flying past the entrance to the cavern feels as if one wing were in the region of summer, and the other in the depths of winter."

"So this, then, is the way to the garden of paradise ?" asked the prince, as they entered the cavern. It was indeed cold ; but the cold soon passed, for the East Wind spread his wings, and they gleamed like the brightest fire. As they passed on through this wonderful cave, the prince could see great blocks of stone, from which water trickled, hanging over their heads in fantastic shapes. Sometimes it was so narrow that they had to creep on their hands and knees, while at other times it was lofty and wide, like the free air. It had the appearance of a chapel for the dead, with petrified organs and silent pipes. "We seem to be passing through the valley of death to the garden of paradise," said the prince.

But the East Wind answered not a word, only pointed forwards to a lovely blue light which gleamed in the distance. The blocks of stone assumed a misty appearance, till at last they looked like white clouds in moonlight. The air was fresh and balmy, like a breeze from the mountains perfumed with flowers from a valley of roses. A river, clear as the air itself, sparkled at their feet, while in its clear depths could be seen gold and silver fish sporting in the bright water, and purple eels emitting sparks of fire at every moment, while the broad leaves of the water-lilies, that floated on its surface, flickered with all the colours of the rainbow. The flower in its colour of flame seemed to receive its nourishment from the water, as a lamp is sustained by oil. A marble bridge, of such exquisite workmanship that it appeared as if formed of lace and pearls, led to the island of happiness, in which bloomed the garden of paradise. The East Wind took the prince in his arms, and carried him over, while the flowers and the leaves sang the sweet songs of his childhood in tones so full and soft that no human voice could venture to imitate. Within the garden grew large trees, full of sap; but whether they were palm-trees or gigantic water-plants, the prince knew not. The climbing plants hung in garlands of green and gold, like the illuminations on the margins of old missals or twined among the initial letters. Birds, flowers, and festoons appeared intermingled in seeming confusion. Close by, on the grass, stood a group of peacocks, with radiant tails outspread to the sun. The prince touched them, and found, to his surprise, that they were not really birds, but the leaves of the burdock tree, which shone with the colours of a peacock's tail. The lion and the tiger, gentle and tame, were springing about like playful cats among the green bushes, whose perfume was like the fragrant blossom of the olive. The plumage of the wood-pigeon glistened like pearls as it struck the lion's mane with its wings; while the antelope, usually so shy, stood near, nodding its head as if it wished to join in the frolic. The fairy of paradise next made her appearance. Her raiment shone like the sun, and her serene countenance beamed with happiness like that of a mother rejoicing over her child. She was young and beautiful, and a train of

lovely maidens followed her, each wearing a bright star in her hair. The East Wind gave her the palm-leaf, on which was written the



"THE FAIRY OF PARADISE NEXT MADE HER APPEARANCE."—*p.* 308.

history of the phœnix; and her eyes sparkled with joy. She then took the prince by the hand, and led him into her palace, the walls of which were richly coloured, like a tulip-leaf when it is turned to the sun. The roof had the appearance of an inverted flower, and the colours grew deeper and brighter to the gazer. The prince walked to a window, and saw what appeared to be the tree of knowledge of good and evil, with Adam and Eve standing by, and the

serpent near them. "I thought they were banished from paradise," he said.

The princess smiled, and told him that time had engraved each event on a window-pane in the form of a picture; but, unlike other pictures, all that it represented lived and moved,—the leaves rustled, and the persons went and came, as in a looking-glass. He looked through another pane, and saw the ladder in Jacob's dream, on which the angels were ascending and descending with outspread wings. All that had ever happened in the world here lived and moved on the panes of glass, in pictures such as time alone could produce. The fairy now led the prince into a large, lofty room with transparent walls, through which the light shone. Here were portraits, each one appearing more beautiful than the other—millions of happy beings, whose laughter and song mingled in one sweet melody: some of these were in such an elevated position that they appeared smaller than the smallest rosebud, or like pencil dots on paper. In the centre of the hall stood a tree, with drooping branches, from which hung golden apples, both great and small, looking like oranges amid the green leaves. It was the tree of knowledge of good and evil, from which Adam and Eve had plucked and eaten the forbidden fruit, and from each leaf trickled a bright red dew-drop, as if the tree were weeping tears of blood for their sin. "Let us now take the boat," said the fairy; "a sail on the cool waters will refresh us. But we shall not move from the spot, although the boat may rock on the swelling water; the countries of the world will glide before us, but we shall still remain."

It was indeed wonderful to behold. First came the lofty Alps, snow-clad, and covered with clouds and dark pines. Next the horn resounded, and the shepherds sang merrily in the valleys. The banana-trees bent their drooping branches over the boat, black swans floated on the water, and singular animals and flowers appeared on the distant shore. *New Holland*, now Australia, the fifth division of the world, glided by, with mountains in the background, looking blue in the distance. They heard the song of their priests, and saw the wild dance of the savage to the sound

of the drums and trumpets of bone ; the pyramids of Egypt rising to the clouds ; columns and sphinxes, overthrown and buried in the sand, followed in their turn ; while the northern lights flashed out over the extinguished volcanoes of the north, in fireworks none could imitate.

The prince was delighted, for he saw hundreds of other wonderful things more than can be described. "Can I stay here for ever?" asked he.

"That depends upon yourself," replied the fairy. "If you do not, like Adam, long for what is forbidden, you can remain here always."

"I should not touch the fruit on the tree of knowledge," said the prince ; "there is abundance of fruit equally beautiful."

"Examine your own heart," said the princess, "and if you do not feel sure of its strength, return with the East Wind who brought you. He is about to fly back, and will not return here for a hundred years. The time will not seem to you more than a hundred hours, yet even that is a long time for temptation and resistance. Every evening, when I leave you, I shall be obliged to say, 'Come with me,' and to beckon to you with my hand. But you must not listen, nor move from your place to follow me ; for with every step you will find your power to resist weaker. If once you attempted to follow me, you would soon find yourself in the hall, where grows the tree of knowledge, for I sleep beneath its perfumed branches. If you stooped over me, I should be forced to smile. If you then kissed my lips, the garden of paradise would sink into the earth, and to you it would be lost. A keen wind from the desert would howl around you ; cold rain fall on your head, and sorrow and woe be your future lot."

"I will remain," said the prince.

So the East Wind kissed him on the forehead, and said, "Be firm : then shall we meet again when a hundred years have passed. Farewell, farewell." Then the East Wind spread his broad pinions, which shone like the lightning in harvest, or as the northern lights in a cold winter.

"Farewell, farewell," echoed the trees and the flowers.

Storks and pelicans flew after him in feathery bands, to accompany him to the boundaries of the garden.

"Now we will commence dancing," said the fairy; "and when it is nearly over at sunset, while I am dancing with you, I shall make a sign, and ask you to follow me: but do not obey. I shall be obliged to repeat the same thing for a hundred years; and each time, when the trial is past, if you resist, you will gain strength, till resistance becomes easy, and at last the temptation will be quite overcome. This evening, as it will be the first time, I have warned you."

After this the fairy led him into a large hall, filled with white transparent lilies. The yellow stamina of each flower formed a tiny golden harp, from which came forth strains of music like the mingled tones of flute and lyre. Beautiful maidens, slender and graceful in form, and robed in transparent gauze, floated through the dance, and sang of the happy life in the garden of paradise, where death never entered, and where all would bloom for ever in immortal youth. As the sun went down, the whole heavens became crimson and gold, and tinted the lilies with the hue of roses. Then the beautiful maidens offered to the prince sparkling wine; and when he had drank, he felt happiness greater than he had ever known before. Presently the background of the hall opened, and the tree of knowledge appeared, surrounded by a halo of glory that almost blinded him. Voices, soft and lovely as his mother's, sounded in his ears, as if she were singing to him, "My child, my beloved child." Then the fairy beckoned to him, and said in sweet accents, "Come with me, come with me." Forgetting his promise, forgetting it even on the very first evening, he rushed towards her, while she continued to beckon to him and to smile. The fragrance around him overpowered his senses, the music from the harps sounded more entrancing, while around the tree appeared millions of smiling faces, nodding and singing, "Man should know everything; man is the lord of the earth." The tree of knowledge no longer wept tears of blood, for the dewdrops shone like glittering stars.

"Come, come," continued the thrilling voice, and the prince

followed the call. At every step his cheeks glowed, and the blood rushed wildly through his veins. "I must follow," he cried; "it is not a sin, it cannot be, to follow beauty and joy. I only want to see her asleep, and nothing will happen unless I kiss her, and that I will not do, for I have strength to resist, and a determined will."

The fairy threw off her dazzling attire, bent back the boughs, and in another moment was hidden among them.

"I have not sinned yet," said the prince, "and I will not;" and then he pushed aside the boughs to follow the princess. She was lying already asleep, beautiful as only a fairy in the garden of paradise could be. She smiled as he bent over her, and he saw tears trembling on her beautiful eyelashes. "Do you weep for me?" he whispered. "Oh weep not, thou loveliest of women. Now do I begin to understand the happiness of paradise; I feel it to my inmost soul, in every thought. A new life is born within me. One moment of such happiness is worth an eternity of darkness and woe." He stooped and kissed the tears from her eyes, and touched her lips with his.

A clap of thunder, loud and awful, resounded through the trembling air. All around him fell into ruin. The lovely fairy, the beautiful garden, sunk deeper and deeper. The prince saw it sinking down in the dark night till it shone only like a star in the distance beneath him. Then he felt a coldness, like death, creeping over him; his eyes closed, and he became insensible.

When he recovered a chilling rain was beating upon him, and a sharp wind blew on his head. "Alas! what have I done?" he sighed. "I have sinned like Adam, and the garden of paradise has sunk into the earth." He opened his eyes, and saw the star in the distance, but it was the morning star in heaven which glittered in the darkness.

Presently he stood up and found himself in the depths of the forest, close to the cavern of the Winds, and the mother of the Winds sat by his side. She looked angry, and raised her arm in the air as she spoke. "The very first evening!" she said. "Well, I expected it! If you were my son, you should go into the sack."

"And there he will have to go at last," said a strong old man, with large black wings, and a scythe in his hand, whose name was Death. "He shall be laid in his coffin, but not yet. I will allow him to wander about the world for a while, to atone for his sin, and to give him time to become better. But I shall return when he least expects me. I shall lay him in a black coffin, place it on my head, and fly away with it beyond the stars. There also blooms a garden of paradise, and if he is good and pious he will be admitted; but if his thoughts are bad, and his heart is full of sin, he will sink with his coffin deeper than the garden of paradise has sunk. Once in every thousand years I shall go and fetch him, when he will either be condemned to sink still deeper, or be raised to a happier life in the world beyond the stars."

The Mail-Coach Passengers.

It was bitterly cold, the sky glittered with stars, and not a breeze stirred. "Bump"—an old pot was thrown at a neighbour's door; and "bang, bang," went the guns; for they were greeting the New Year. It was New Year's Eve, and the church clock was striking twelve. "Tan-ta-ra-ra, tan-ta-ra-ra," sounded the horn, and the mail-coach came lumbering up. The clumsy vehicle stopped at the gate of the town; all the places had been taken, for there were twelve passengers in the coach.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" cried the people in the town, for in every house the New Year was being welcomed; and as the clock struck they stood up, the full glasses in their hands, to drink success to the new-comer. "A happy New Year," was the cry; "a pretty wife, plenty of money, and no sorrow or care."

The wish passed round, and the glasses clashed together till they rang again; while before the town-gate the mail coach stopped with the twelve strange passengers. And who were these strangers? Each of them had his passport and his luggage with

him; they even brought presents for me, and for you, and for all the people in the town. "Who were they? what did they want? and what did they bring with them?"

"Good-morning," they cried to the sentry at the town-gate.

"Good-morning," replied the sentry; for the clock had struck twelve. "Your name and profession?" asked the sentry of the one who alighted first from the carriage.

"See for yourself in the passport," he replied. "I am myself;" and a famous fellow he looked, arrayed in bear-skin and fur boots. "I am the man on whom many persons fix their hopes. Come to me to-morrow, and I'll give you a New Year's present. I throw shillings and pence among the people; I give balls, no less than thirty-one; indeed, that is the highest number I can spare for balls. My ships are often frozen in, but in my offices it is warm and comfortable. My name is JANUARY. I'm a merchant, and I generally bring my accounts with me."

Then the second alighted. He seemed a merry fellow. He was a director of a theatre, a manager of masked balls, and a leader of all the amusements we can imagine. His luggage consisted of a great cask.

"We'll dance the bung out of the cask at carnival time," said he; "I'll prepare a merry tune for you and for myself too. Unfortunately, I have not long to live—the shortest time, in fact, of my whole family—only twenty-eight days. Sometimes they pop me in a day extra; but I trouble myself very little about that. Hurrah!"

"You must not shout so," said the sentry.

"Certainly I *may* shout," retorted the man; "I'm Prince Carnival, travelling under the name of FEBRUARY."

The third now got out. He looked a personification of fasting; but he carried his nose very high, for he was related to the "forty (*k*)nights," and was a weather prophet. But that is not a very lucrative office, and therefore he praised fasting. In his button-hole he carried a little bunch of violets, but they were very small.

"MARCH, March," the fourth called after him, slapping him on the shoulder, "don't you smell something? Make haste into the

guard-room ; they're drinking punch there ; that's your favourite drink. I can smell it out here already. Forward, Master *March*." But it was not true ; the speaker only wanted to remind him of his name, and to make an APRIL *fool* of him ; for with that fun the fourth generally began his career. He looked very jovial, did little work, and had the more holidays. "If the world were only a little more settled," said he ; "but sometimes I'm obliged to be in a good humour, and sometimes a bad one, according to circumstances—now rain, now sunshine. I'm a kind of house agent,* also a manager of funerals. I can laugh or cry, according to circumstances. I have my summer wardrobe in this box here, but it would be very foolish to put it on now. Here I am. On Sundays I go out walking in shoes and white silk stockings, and a muff."

After him, a lady stepped out of the coach. She called herself Miss MAY. She wore a summer dress and overshoes ; her dress was a light green, and she wore anemones in her hair. She was so scented with wild-thyme that it made the sentry sneeze.

"Your health, and God bless you," was her salutation to him.

How pretty she was ! and such a singer ! not a theatre singer, nor a ballad singer : no, but a singer of the woods ; for she wandered through the gay green forest, and had a concert there for her own amusement.

"Now comes the young bride," said those in the carriage ; and out stepped a young dame, delicate, proud, and pretty. It was Mistress JUNE, in whose service people become lazy and fond of sleeping for hours. She gives a feast on the longest day of the year, that there may be time for her guests to partake of the numerous dishes at her table. Indeed, she keeps her own carriage ; but still she travelled by the mail, with the rest, because she wished to show that she was not high-minded. But she was not without a protector : her younger brother, JULY, was with her. He was a plump young fellow, clad in summer garments and

* It is the custom in Denmark to change houses in April, generally on one particular day of the month, which is therefore called "moving or flitting day." April is here, therefore, called a "house agent," as well as the manager of funerals, as the changeable weather in this month is considered very unhealthy.

wearing a straw hat. He had but very little luggage with him, because it was so troublesome in the great heat; he had, however, swimming-trousers with him, which are nothing to carry. Then came the mother herself, Madame AUGUST, a wholesale dealer in fruit, proprietress of a large number of fish-ponds and a land cultivator. She was fat and heated, yet she could use her hands well, and would herself carry out beer to the labourers in the field. "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," said she; "it is written in the Bible." After work came the recreations, dancing and playing in the greenwood, and the "harvest homes." She was a thorough housewife.

After her a man came out of the coach, who is a painter; he is the great master of colours, and is named SEPTEMBER. The forest, on his arrival, had to change its colours when he wished it; and how beautiful are the colours he chooses! The woods glow with hues of red and gold and brown. This great master painter could whistle like a blackbird. He was quick in his work, and soon entwined the tendrils of the hop plant around his beer jug. This was an ornament to the jug; and he has a great love for ornament. There he stood with his colour-pot in his hand, and that was the whole of his luggage. A landowner followed, who in the month for sowing seed attended to the ploughing, and was fond of field sports. Squire OCTOBER brought his dog and his gun with him, and had nuts in his game bag. "Crack, crack." He had a great deal of luggage—even an English plough. He spoke of farming, but what he said could scarcely be heard for the coughing and gasping of his neighbour. It was NOVEMBER, who coughed violently as he got out. He had a cold, which caused him to use his pocket-handkerchief continually; and yet he said he was obliged to accompany servant girls to their new places, and initiate them into their winter service. He said he thought his cold would leave him when he went out wood-cutting, for he was a master sawyer, and had to supply wood to the whole parish. He spent his evenings preparing wooden soles for skates, for he knew, he said, that in a few weeks these shoes would be wanted for the amusement of skating. At length the last passenger made her appearance,

—old Mother DECEMBER, with her fire-stool. The dame was very old, but her eyes glistened like two stars. She carried on her arm a flower-pot, in which a little fir-tree was growing. "This tree I shall guard and cherish," she said, "that it may grow large by Christmas Eve, and reach from the ground to the ceiling, to be covered and adorned with flaming candles, golden apples, and little figures. The fire-stool will be as warm as a stove, and I shall then bring a story book out of my pocket, and read aloud till all the children in the room are quite quiet. Then the little figures on the tree will become lively, and the little waxen angel at the top will spread out his wings of gold-leaf, and fly down from his green perch. He will kiss every one in the room, great and small; yes, even the poor children who stand in the passage, or out in the street singing a carol about the 'Star of Bethlehem.'"

"Well, now the coach may drive away," said the sentry; "we have the whole twelve. Let the horses be put up."

"First, let all the twelve come to me," said the captain on duty, "one after another. The passports I will keep here. Each of them is available for one month; when that has passed, I shall write the behaviour of each on his passport. Mr. JANUARY, have the goodness to come here." And Mr. January stepped forward.

When a year has passed, I think I shall be able to tell you what the twelve passengers have brought to you, to me, and to all of us. Now I do not know, and probably even they won't know themselves, for we live in strange times.

Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER is very old; her face is wrinkled, and her hair is quite white, but her eyes are like two stars, and they have a mild, gentle expression in them when they look at you, which does you good. She wears a dress of heavy, rich silk, with large flowers worked on it; and it rustles when she moves. And then she can

tell the most wonderful stories. Grandmother knows a great deal, for she was alive before father and mother—that's quite certain. She has a hymn-book, with large silver clasps, in which she often reads; and in the book, between the leaves, lies a rose, quite flat and dry; it is not as pretty as the roses which are standing in the glass, and yet she smiles at it most pleasantly, and tears even come into her eyes. "I wonder why grandmother looks at the withered flower in the old book in that way? Do you know?" Why, when grandmother's tears fall upon the rose, and she is looking at it, the rose revives, and fills the room with its fragrance; the walls vanish as in a mist, and all around her is the glorious green wood, where in summer the sunlight streams through thick foliage; and grandmother, why she is young again, a charming maiden, fresh as a rose, with round, rosy cheeks, fair, bright ringlets, and a figure pretty and graceful; but the eyes, those mild, saintly eyes, are the same,—they have been left to grandmother. At her side sits a young man, tall and strong; he gives her a rose and she smiles. Grandmother cannot smile like that now. Yes, she is smiling at the memory of that day, and many thoughts and recollections of the past; but the handsome young man is gone, and the rose has withered in the old book; and grandmother is sitting there, again an old woman, looking down upon the withered rose in the book.

Grandmother is dead now. She had been sitting in her arm-chair, telling us a long, beautiful tale; and when it was finished, she said she was tired, and leaned her head back to sleep awhile. We could hear her gentle breathing as she slept; gradually it became quieter and calmer, and on her countenance beamed happiness and peace. It was as if lighted up with a ray of sunshine. She smiled once more, and then people said she was dead. She was laid in a black coffin, looking mild and beautiful in the white folds of the shrouded linen, though her eyes were closed; but every wrinkle had vanished, her hair looked white and silvery, and around her mouth lingered a sweet smile. We did not feel at all afraid to look at the corpse of her who had been such a dear, good grandmother. The hymn-book, in which the rose still

lay, was placed under her head, for so she had wished it; and then they buried grandmother.

On the grave, close by the churchyard wall, they planted a rose-tree; it was soon full of roses, and the nightingale sat among the flowers, and sang over the grave. From the organ in the church sounded the music and the words of the beautiful psalms, which were written in the old book under the head of the dead one.

The moon shone down upon the grave, but the dead was not there; every child could go safely, even at night, and pluck a rose from the tree by the churchyard wall. The dead know more than we do who are living. They know what a terror would come upon us if such a strange thing were to happen, as the appearance of a dead person among us. They are better off than we are; the dead return no more. The earth has been heaped on the coffin, and it is earth only that lies within it. The leaves of the hymn-book are dust; and the rose, with all its recollections, has crumbled to dust also. But over the grave fresh roses bloom, the nightingale sings, and the organ sounds; and there still lives a remembrance of old grandmother, with the loving, gentle eyes that always looked young. Ours will once again behold dear grandmother, young and beautiful as when, for the first time, she kissed the fresh, red rose that is now dust in the grave.

The Last Pearl.

We are in a rich, happy house, where the master, the servants, the friends of the family are full of joy and felicity. For on this day a son and heir has been born, and mother and child are doing well. The lamp in the bedchamber had been partly shaded, and the windows were covered with heavy curtains of some costly silken material. The carpet was thick and soft, like a covering of moss. Everything invited to slumber, everything had a charming look of repose; and so the nurse had discovered, for she slept; and

well she might sleep, while everything around her told of happiness and blessing. The guardian angel of the house leaned against the head of the bed; while over the child was spread, as it were, a net of shining stars, and each star was a pearl of happiness. All the good stars of life had brought their gifts to the newly born; here sparkled health, wealth, fortune, and love; in short, there seemed to be everything for which man could wish on earth.

"Everything has been bestowed here," said the guardian angel.

"No, not everything," said a voice near him—the voice of the good angel of the child; "one fairy has not yet brought her gift, but she will, even if years should elapse, she will bring her gift; it is the last pearl that is wanting."

"Wanting!" cried the guardian angel; "nothing must be wanting here: and, if it is so, let us fetch it; let us seek the powerful fairy; let us go to her!"

"She will come, she will come some day, unsought!"

"Her pearl must not be missing; it must be there, that the crown, when worn, may be complete. Where is she to be found? where does she dwell?" said the guardian angel. "Tell me, and I will procure the pearl."

"Will you do that?" replied the good angel of the child. "Then I will lead you to her directly, wherever she may be. She has no abiding place. She rules in the palace of the emperor, sometimes she enters the peasant's humble cot; she passes no one without leaving a trace of her presence. She brings her gift with her, whether it is a world or a bauble. To this child she must come. You think that to wait for this time would be long and useless. Well, then, let us go for this pearl—the only one lacking amidst all this wealth."

Then, hand-in-hand, they floated away to the spot where the fairy was now lingering. It was in a large house with dark windows and empty rooms, in which a peculiar stillness reigned. A whole row of windows stood open, so that the rude wind could enter at its pleasure, and the long white curtains waved to and fro in the current of air. In the centre of one of the rooms stood an open coffin, in which lay the body of a woman, still in the

bloom of youth, and very beautiful. Fresh roses were scattered over her. The delicate folded hands and the noble face glorified in death by the solemn, earnest look, which spoke of an entrance into a better world, were alone visible. Around the coffin stood the husband and children, a whole troop, the youngest in the father's arms. They were come to take a last farewell look of their mother. The husband kissed her hand, which now lay like a withered leaf, but which a short time before had been diligently employed in deeds of love for them all. Tears of sorrow rolled down their cheeks, and fell in heavy drops on the floor, but not a word was spoken. The silence which reigned here expressed a world of grief. With silent steps, still sobbing, they left the room. A burning light remained in it, and a long, red wick rose far above the flame, which fluttered in the draught of air. Strange men came in and placed the lid of the coffin over the dead, and drove the nails firmly in; while the blows of the hammer resounded through the house, and echoed in the hearts that were bleeding.

"Whither art thou leading me?" asked the guardian angel. "Here dwells no fairy whose pearl could be counted amongst the best gifts of life."

"Yes, she is here; here in this sacred hour," replied the angel, pointing to a corner of the room; and there,—where in her life-time, the mother had taken her seat amidst flowers and pictures: in that spot, where she, like the blessed fairy of the house, had welcomed husband, children, and friends, and, like a sunbeam, had spread joy and cheerfulness around her, the centre and heart of them all,—there, in that very spot, sat a strange woman, clothed in long, flowing garments, and occupying the place of the dead wife and mother. It was the fairy, and her name was "Sorrow." A hot tear rolled into her lap, and formed itself into a pearl, glowing with all the colours of the rainbow. The angel seized it; the pearl glittered like a star with seven-fold radiance. The pearl of Sorrow, the last, which must not be wanting, increases the lustre, and explains the meaning of all the other pearls.

"Do you see the shimmer of the rainbow, which unites earth

to heaven ?" So has there been a bridge built between this world and the next. Through the night of the grave we gaze upwards beyond the stars to the end of all things. Then we glance at the pearl of Sorrow, in which are concealed the wings which shall carry us away to eternal happiness.

Something.

"I MEAN to be somebody, and to do something useful in the world," said the eldest of five brothers. "I don't care how humble my position is, so that I can only do some good, which will be something. I intend to be a brickmaker; bricks are always wanted, and I shall be really doing something."

"Your 'something' is not enough for me," said the second brother; "what you talk of doing is nothing at all, it is journeyman's work, or might even be done by a machine. No! I should prefer to be a builder at once, there is something real in that. A man gains a position, he becomes a citizen, has his own sign, his own house of call for his workmen: so I shall be a builder. If all goes well, in time I shall become a master, and have my own journeymen, and my wife will be treated as a master's wife. That is what *I* call something."

"I call it all nothing," said the third; "not in reality any position. There are many in a town far above a master builder in position. You may be an upright man, but even as a master you will only be ranked among common men. I know better what to do than that. I will be an architect, which will place me among those who possess riches and intellect, and who speculate in art. I shall certainly have to rise by my own endeavours from a bricklayer's labourer, or a carpenter's apprentice—a lad wearing a paper cap, although then I shall wear a silk hat. I shall have to fetch beer and spirits for the journeymen, and they will call me 'thou,' which will be an insult. I shall endure it, however,

for I shall look upon it all as a mere representation, a masquerade, a mummery, which to-morrow, that is, when I myself as a journeyman, shall have served my time, will vanish, and I shall go my way, and all that has passed will be nothing to me. Then I shall enter the academy, and get instructed in drawing, and be called an architect. That is something; it is indeed more than something. I may even attain to rank, and have something placed before or after my name, and I shall build as others have done before me. By this there will be always 'something' to make me remembered, and is not that worth living for?"

"Not in my opinion," said the fourth; "I will never follow the lead of others, and only imitate what they have done. I will be a genius, and become greater than all of you together. I will create a new style of building, and introduce a plan for erecting houses suitable to the climate, with material easily obtained in the country, and thus suit national feeling and the developments of the age, besides building a storey for my own genius."

"But supposing the climate and the material are not good for much," said the fifth brother, "that would be very unfortunate for you, and have an influence over your experiments. Nationality may assert itself until it becomes affectation, and the developments of a century may run wild, as youth often does. I see clearly that none of you will ever really be anything worth notice, however you may now fancy it. But do as you like, I shall not imitate you. I mean to keep clear of all these things, and criticise what you do. In every action something imperfect may be discovered, something not right, which I shall make it my business to find out and expose; that will be something, I fancy." And he kept his word, and became a critic.

People said of this fifth brother, "There is something very precise about him; he has a good headpiece, but he does nothing." And on that very account they thought he must be something.

Now, you see, this is a little history which will never end; as long as the world exists, there will always be men like these five brothers. And what became of them? were they each nothing or something? You shall hear; it is quite a history.

The eldest brother, he who fabricated bricks, soon discovered that each brick, when finished, brought him in a small coin, if only a copper one ; and many copper pieces, if placed one upon another, can be changed into a shining shilling ; and at whatever door a person knocks, who has a number of these in his hands, whether it be the baker's, the butcher's, or the tailor's, the door flies open, and he can get all he wants. So you see the value of bricks. Some of the bricks, however, crumbled to pieces, or were broken, but the elder brother found a use for even these.

On the high bank of earth, which formed a dyke on the sea-coast, a poor woman named Margaret wished to build herself a house, so all the imperfect bricks were given to her, and a few whole ones with them ; for the eldest brother was a kind-hearted man, although he never achieved anything higher than making bricks. The poor woman built herself a little house—it was small and narrow, and the window was quite crooked, the door too low, and the straw roof might have been better thatched. But still it was a shelter, and from within you could look far over the sea, which dashed wildly against the sea-wall on which the little house was built. The salt waves sprinkled their white foam over it, but it stood firm, and remained long after he who had given the bricks to build it was dead and buried.

The second brother of course knew better how to build than poor Margaret, for he had served an apprenticeship to learn it. When his time was up, he packed up his knapsack, and went on his travels, singing the journeyman's song,—

> "While young, I can wander without a care,
> And build new houses everywhere ;
> Fair and bright are my dreams of home,
> Always thought of wherever I roam.
>
> "Hurrah for a workman's life of glee !
> There's a loved one at home who thinks of me ;
> Home and friends I can ne'er forget,
> And I mean to be a master yet."

And that is what he did. On his return home, he became a master builder,—built one house after another in the town, till



"FROM WITHIN YOU COULD LOOK FAR OVER THE SEA."—*p.* 325.

they formed quite a street, which, when finished, became really an ornament to the town. These houses built a house for him in return, which was to be his own. But how can houses build a house? If the houses were asked, they could not answer; but the people would understand and say, "Certainly the street built his house for him." It was not very large, and the floor was of lime; but when he danced with his bride on the lime-covered floor, it was to him white and shining, and from every stone in the wall flowers seemed to spring forth and decorate the room as with the richest tapestry. It was really a pretty house, and in it were a happy pair. The flag of the corporation fluttered before it, and the journeymen and apprentices shouted "Hurrah!" He had gained his position, he had made himself something, and at last he died, which was "something" too.

Now we come to the architect, the third brother, who had been first a carpenter's apprentice, had worn a cap, and served as an errand boy, but afterwards went to the academy, and rose to be an architect, a high and noble gentleman. Ah yes, the houses of the new street, which the brother, who was a master builder, erected, may have built his house for him, but the street received its name from the architect, and the handsomest house in the street became his property. That was something, and he was "something," for he had a list of titles before and after his name. His children were called "well-born," and when he died, his widow was treated as a lady of position, and that was "something." His name remained always written at the corner of the street, and lived in every one's mouth as its name. Yes, this also was "something."

And what about the genius of the family—the fourth brother—who wanted to invent something new and original? He tried to build a lofty storey himself, but it fell to pieces, and he fell with it and broke his neck. However, he had a splendid funeral, with the city flags and music in the procession; flowers were strewn on the pavement, and three orations were spoken over his grave, each one longer than the other. He would have liked this very much during his life, as well as the poems about him in the papers, for he liked nothing so well as to be talked of. A monument was also erected over his grave. It was only another storey over him, but that was "something." Now he was dead, like the three other brothers.

The youngest—the critic—outlived them all, which was quite right for him. It gave him the opportunity of having the last word, which to him was of great importance. People always said he had a good headpiece. At last his hour came, and he died, and arrived at the gates of heaven. Souls always enter these gates in pairs; so he found himself standing and waiting for admission with another; and who should it be but old dame Margaret, from the house on the dyke! "It is evidently for the sake of contrast that I and this wretched soul should arrive here exactly at the same time," said the critic. "Pray who are

you, my good woman?" said he; "do you want to get in here too?"

And the old woman curtsied as well as she could; she thought it must be St. Peter himself who spoke to her. "I am a poor old woman," she said, "without any family. I am old Margaret, that lived in the house on the dyke."

"Well, and what have you done—what great deed have you performed down below?"

"I have done nothing at all in the world that could give me a claim to have these doors open for me," she said. "It would be only through mercy that I can be allowed to slip in through the gate."

"In what manner did you leave the world?" he asked, just for the sake of saying something; for it made him feel very weary to stand there and wait.

"How I left the world?" she replied; "why, I can scarcely tell you. During the last years of my life I was sick and miserable, and I was unable to bear creeping out of bed suddenly into the frost and cold. Last winter was a hard winter, but I have got over it all now. There were a few mild days, as your honour, no doubt, knows. The ice lay thickly on the lake, as far as one could see. The people came from the town, and walked upon it; and they say there were dancing and skating upon it, I believe, and a great feasting. The sound of beautiful music came into my poor little room where I lay. Towards evening, when the moon rose beautifully, though not yet in her full splendour, I glanced from my bed out over the wide sea; and there, just where the sea and sky met, rose a curious white cloud. I lay looking at the cloud till I observed a little black spot in the middle of it, which gradually grew larger and larger, and then I knew what it meant—I am old and experienced; and although this token is not often seen, I knew it, and a shuddering seized me. Twice in my life had I seen this same thing, and I knew that there would be an awful storm, with a spring tide, which would overwhelm the poor people who were now out on the ice, drinking, dancing, and making merry. Young and old, the whole city, were there; who was to warn them

if no one noticed the sign, or knew what it meant, as I did? I was so alarmed, that I felt more strength and life than I had done for some time. I got out of bed, and reached the window; I could not crawl any farther, from weakness and exhaustion; but I managed to open the window. I saw the people outside running and jumping about on the ice; I saw the beautiful flags waving in the wind; I heard the boys shouting, 'Hurrah!' and the lads and lasses singing, and everything full of merriment and joy. But there was the white cloud with the black spot hanging over them. I cried out as loudly as I could, but no one heard me; I was too far off from the people. Soon would the storm burst, the ice break, and all who were on it be irretrievably lost. They could not hear me, and to go to them was quite out of my power. Oh, if I could only get them safe on land! Then came the thought, as if from Heaven, that I would rather set fire to my bed, and let the house be burnt down, than that so many people should perish miserably. I got a light, and in a few moments the red flames leaped up as a beacon to them. I escaped fortunately as far as the threshold of the door; but there I fell down and remained: I could go no farther. The flames rushed out towards me, flickered on the window, and rose high above the roof. The people on the ice became aware of the fire, and ran as fast as possible to help a poor sick woman, who, as they thought, was being burnt to death. There was not one who did not run. I heard them coming, and I also at the same time was conscious of a rush of air and a sound like the roar of heavy artillery. The spring flood was lifting the ice covering, which brake into a thousand pieces. But the people had reached the sea-wall, where the sparks were flying round. I had saved them all; but I suppose I could not survive the cold and fright; so I came up here to the gates of paradise. I am told they are opened to poor creatures such as I am, and I have now no house left on earth; but I do not think that will give me a claim to be admitted here."

Then the gates were opened, and an angel led the old woman in. She had dropped one little straw out of her straw bed, when she set it on fire to save the lives of so many. It had been changed

into the purest gold—into gold that constantly grew and expanded into flowers and fruit of immortal beauty.

"See," said the angel, pointing to the wonderful straw, "this is what the poor woman has brought. What dost thou bring? I know thou hast accomplished nothing, not even made a single brick. Even if thou couldst return, and at least produce so much, very likely, when made, the brick would be useless, unless done with a good will, which is always something. But thou canst not return to earth, and I can do nothing for thee."

Then the poor soul, the old mother who had lived in the house on the dyke, pleaded for him. She said, "His brother made all the bricks, and sent them to me to build my poor little dwelling, which was a great deal to do for a poor woman like me. Could not all these bricks and pieces be as a wall of stone to prevail for him? It is an act of mercy; he is wanting it now; and here is the very fountain of mercy."

"Then," said the angel, "thy brother, he who has been looked upon as the meanest of you all, he whose honest deeds to thee appeared so humble,—it is he who has sent you this heavenly gift. Thou shalt not be turned away. Thou shalt have permission to stand without the gate and reflect, and repent of thy life on earth; but thou shalt not be admitted here until thou hast performed one good deed of repentance, which will indeed for thee be *something*."

"I could have expressed that better," thought the critic; but he did not say it aloud, which for him was SOMETHING, after all.

A Cheerful Temper.

FROM my father I received the best inheritance, namely a "good temper." "And who was my father?" That has nothing to do with the good temper; but I will say he was lively, good looking, round, and fat; he was both in appearance and character a

complete contradiction to his profession. "And pray what was his profession and his standing in respectable society?" Well, perhaps, if in the beginning of a book these were written and printed, many, when they read it, would lay the book down and say, "It seems a me a very miserable title, I don't like things of this sort." And yet my father was not a tanner nor an executioner; on the contrary, his employment placed him at the head of the grandest people of the town, and it was his place by right. He had to precede the bishop, and even the princes of the blood; he always went first,—he was a hearse-driver! There, now, the truth is out. And I will own, that when people saw my father perched up in front of the omnibus of death, dressed in his long, wide, black cloak, and his black-edged, three-cornered hat on his head, and then glanced at his round, jocund face, round as the sun, they could not think much of sorrow or the grave. That face said, "It is nothing, it will all end better than people think." So I have inherited from him, not only my good temper, but a habit of going often to the churchyard, which is good, when done in a proper humour; and then also I take in the *Intelligencer*, just as he used to do.

I am not very young, I have neither wife nor children, nor a library; but, as I said, I read the *Intelligencer*, which is enough for me; it is to me a delightful paper, and so it was to my father. It is of great use, for it contains all that a man requires to know; the names of the preachers at the church, and the new books which are published; where houses, servants, clothes, and provisions may be obtained. And then what a number of subscriptions to charities, and what innocent verses! Persons seeking interviews and engagements, all so plainly and naturally stated. Certainly, a man who takes in the *Intelligencer* may live merrily and be buried contentedly, and by the end of his life will have such a capital stock of paper that he can lie on a soft bed of it, unless he prefers wood shavings for his resting-place. The newspaper and the churchyard were always exciting objects to me. My walks to the latter were like bathing-places to my good humour. Every one can read the newspaper for himself; but

come with me to the churchyard while the sun shines and the trees are green, and let us wander among the graves. Each of them is like a closed book, with the back uppermost, on which we can read the title of what the book contains, but nothing more. I had a great deal of information from my father, and I have noticed a great deal myself. I keep it in my diary, in which I write for my own use and pleasure a history of all who lie here, and a few more beside.

Now we are in the churchyard. Here, behind the white iron railings, once a rose-tree grew; it is gone now, but a little bit of evergreen, from a neighbouring grave, stretches out its green tendrils, and makes some appearance; there rests a very unhappy man, and yet while he lived he might be said to occupy a very good position. He had enough to live upon, and something to spare; but owing to his refined tastes the least thing in the world annoyed him. If he went to a theatre of an evening, instead of enjoying himself he would be quite annoyed if the machinist had put too strong a light into one side of the moon, or if the representations of the sky hung *over* the scenes when they ought to have hung *behind* them; or if a palm-tree was introduced into a scene representing the Zoological Gardens of Berlin, or a cactus in a view of Tyrol, or a beech-tree in the north of Norway. As if these things were of any consequence! Why did he not leave them alone? Who would trouble themselves about such trifles? especially at a comedy, where every one is expected to be amused. Then sometimes the public applauded too much, or too little, to please him. "They are like wet wood," he would say, looking round to see what sort of people were present, "this evening; nothing fires them." Then he would vex and fret himself because they did not laugh at the right time, or because they laughed in the wrong places; and so he fretted and worried himself till at last the unhappy man fretted himself into the grave.

Here rests a happy man, that is to say, a man of high birth and position, which was very lucky for him, otherwise he would have been scarcely worth notice. It is beautiful to observe how wisely nature orders these things. He walked about in a coat

embroidered all over, and in the drawing-rooms of society looked just like one of those rich pearl-embroidered bell-pulls, which are only made for show; and behind them always hangs a good thick cord for use. This man also had a stout, useful substitute behind him, who did duty for him, and performed all his dirty work. And there are still, even now, these serviceable cords behind other embroidered bell-ropes. It is all so wisely arranged, that a man may well be in a good humour.

Here rests,—ah, it makes one feel mournful to think of him! —but here rests a man who, during sixty-seven years, was never remembered to have said a good thing; he lived only in the hope of having a good idea. At last he felt convinced, in his own mind, that he really had one, and was so delighted that he positively died of joy at the thought of having at last caught an idea. Nobody got anything by it; indeed, no one ever heard what the good thing was. Now I can imagine that this same idea may prevent him from resting quietly in his grave; for suppose that to produce a good effect, it is necessary to bring out his new idea at breakfast, and that he can only make his appearance on earth at midnight, as ghosts are believed generally to do; why then this good idea would not suit the hour, and the man would have to carry it down again with him into the grave—that must be a troubled grave.

The woman who lies here was so remarkably stingy, that during her life she would get up in the night and mew, that her neighbours might think she kept a cat. What a miser she was!

Here rests a young lady, of a good family, who would always make her voice heard in society, and when she sang "Mi manca la voce," * it was the only true thing she ever said in her life.

Here lies a maiden of another description. She was engaged to be married,—but her story is one of every-day life; we will leave her to rest in the grave.

Here rests a widow, who, with music in her tongue, carried gall in her heart. She used to go round among the families near, and search out their faults, upon which she preyed with all the envy and malice of her nature.

* "I want a voice," or, "I have no voice."

This is a family grave. The members of this family held so firmly together in their opinions, that they would believe in no other. If the newspapers, or even the whole world, said of a certain subject, "It is so-and-so;" and a little schoolboy declared he had learned quite differently, they would take his assertion as the only true one, because he belonged to the family. And it is well known that if the yard-cock belonging to this family happened to crow at midnight, they would declare it was morning, although the watchmen and all the clocks in the town were proclaiming the hour of twelve at night.

The great poet Goethe concludes his Faust with the words, "may be continued;" so might our wandering in the churchyard be continued. I come here often, and if any of my friends, or those who are not my friends, are too much for me, I go out and choose a plot of ground in which to bury him or her. Then I bury them, as it were; there they lie, dead and powerless, till they come back new and better characters. Their lives and their deeds, looked at after my own fashion, I write down in my diary, as every one ought to do. Then, if any of our friends act absurdly, no one need to be vexed about it. Let them bury the offenders out of sight, and keep their good temper. They can also read the *Intelligencer*, which is a paper written by the people, with their hands guided. When the time comes for the history of my life, to be bound by the grave, then they will write upon it as my epitaph—

"The man with a cheerful temper."

And this is my story.

The Story of the Wind.

"Near the shores of the great Belt, which is one of the straits that connect the Cattegat with the Baltic, stands an old mansion with thick red walls. I know every stone of it," says the Wind. "I saw it when it was a part of the castle of Marck Stig on the

promontory. But the castle was obliged to be pulled down, and the stone was used again for the walls of a new mansion on another spot—the baronial residence of Borreby, which still stands near the coast. I knew them well, those noble lords and ladies, the successive generations that dwelt there ; and now I'm going to tell you of Waldemar Daa and his daughters. How proud was his bearing, for he was of royal blood, and could boast of more noble deeds than merely hunting the stag and emptying the wine-cup. His rule was despotic : 'It shall be,' he was accustomed to say. His wife, in garments embroidered with gold, stepped proudly over the polished marble floors. The tapestries were gorgeous, and the furniture of costly and artistic taste. She had brought gold and plate with her into the home. The cellars were full of wines. Black, fiery horses neighed in the stables. There was a look of wealth about the house of Borreby at that time. They had three children, daughters, fair and delicate maidens—Ida, Joanna, and Anna Dorothea ; I have never forgotten their names. They were a rich, noble family, born in affluence and nurtured in luxury.

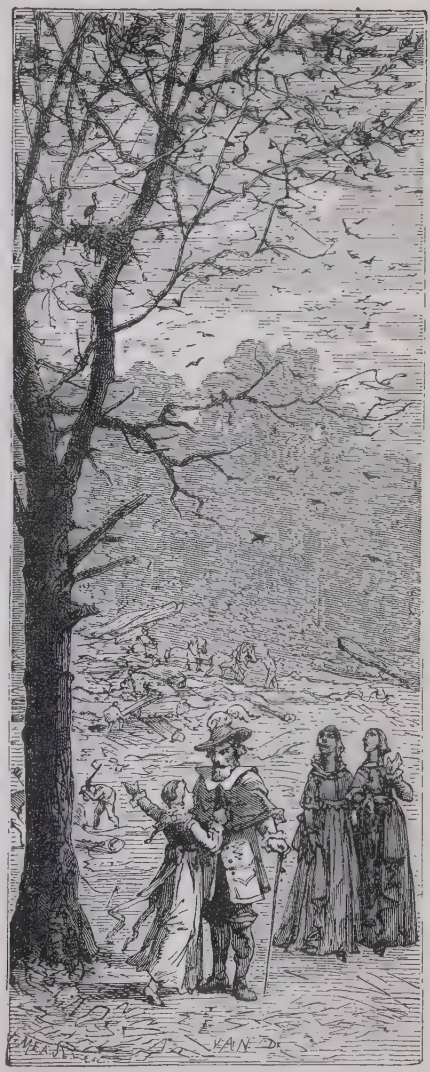
"Whir-r-r, whir-r-r !" roared the Wind, and went on, "I did not see in this house, as in other great houses, the high-born lady sitting among her women, turning the spinning-wheel. She could sweep the sounding chords of the guitar, and sing to the music, not always Danish melodies, but the songs of a strange land. It was 'Live and let live,' here. Stranger guests came from far and near, music sounded, goblets clashed, and I," said the Wind, "was not able to drown the noise. Ostentation, pride, splendour, and display ruled, but not the fear of the Lord.

"It was on the evening of the first day of May," the Wind continued, "I came from the west, and had seen the ships over-powered with the waves, when all on board perished or were cast shipwrecked on the coast of Jutland. I had hurried across the heath and over Jutland's wood-girt eastern coast, and over the island of Funen, and then I drove across the great Belt, sighing and moaning. At length I lay down to rest on the shores of Zeeland, near to the great house of Borreby, where the splendid

forest of oaks still flourished. The young men of the neighbourhood were collecting branches and brushwood under the oak-trees. The largest and driest they could find they carried into the village, and piled them up in a heap and set them on fire. Then the men and maidens danced, and sung in a circle round the blazing pile. I lay quite quiet," said the Wind, "but I silently touched a branch which had been brought by one of the handsomest of the young men, and the wood blazed up brightly, blazed brighter than all the rest. Then he was chosen as the chief, and received the name of the Shepherd; and might choose his lamb from among the maidens. There was greater mirth and rejoicing than I had ever heard in the halls of the rich baronial house. Then the noble lady drove by towards the baron's mansion with her three daughters, in a gilded carriage drawn by six horses. The daughters were young and beautiful—three charming blossoms—a rose, a lily, and a white hyacinth. The mother was a proud tulip, and never acknowledged the salutations of any of the men or maidens who paused in their sports to do her honour. The gracious lady seemed like a flower that was rather stiff in the stalk. Rose, lily, and hyacinth—yes, I saw them all three. Whose little lambs will they one day become? thought I; their shepherd will be a gallant knight, perhaps a prince. The carriage rolled on, and the peasants resumed their dancing. They drove about that summer through all the villages near. But one night, when I rose again, the high-born lady lay down to rise again no more; that thing came to her which comes to us all, in which there is nothing new. Waldemar Daa remained for a time silent and thoughtful. 'The loftiest tree may be bowed without being broken,' said a voice within him. His daughters wept; all the people in the mansion wiped their eyes, but Lady Daa had driven away, and I drove away, too," said the Wind. "Whir-r-r, whir-r-r!

"I returned again; I often returned and passed over the island of Funen and the shores of the Belt. Then I rested by Borreby, near the glorious wood, where the heron made his nest, the haunt of the wood-pigeons, the blue-birds, and the black stork. It was

yet spring, some were sitting on their eggs, others had already hatched their young broods; but how they fluttered about and cried out when the axe sounded through the forest, blow upon blow! The trees of the forest were doomed. Waldemar Daa wanted to build a noble ship, a man-of-war, a three-decker, which the king would be sure to buy; and these, the trees of the wood, the landmark of the seamen, the refuge of the birds, must be felled. The hawk started up and flew away, for its nest was destroyed; the heron and all the birds of the forest became homeless, and flew about in fear and anger. I could well understand how they felt. Crows and ravens croaked, as if in scorn, while the trees were cracking and falling around them. Far in the interior of the wood, where a noisy swarm of labourers were working, stood Waldemar Daa and his three daughters, and



"FAR IN THE INTERIOR OF THE WOOD STOOD WALDEMAR DAA AND HIS THREE DAUGHTERS."

all were laughing at the wild cries of the birds, excepting one, the youngest, Anna Dorothea, who felt grieved to the heart; and when they made preparations to fell a tree that was almost dead, and on whose naked branches the black stork had built her nest, she saw the poor little things stretching out their necks, and she begged for mercy for them, with the tears in her eyes. So the tree with the black stork's nest was left standing; the tree itself, however, was not worth much to speak of. Then there was a great deal of hewing and sawing, and at last the three-decker was built. The builder was a man of low origin, but possessing great pride; his eyes and forehead spoke of large intellect, and Waldemar Daa was fond of listening to him, and so was Waldemar's daughter Ida, the eldest, now about fifteen years old; and while he was building a ship for the father, he was building for himself a castle in the air, in which he and Ida were to live when they were married. This might have happened, indeed, if there had been a real castle, with stone walls, ramparts, and a moat. But in spite of his clever head, the builder was still but a poor, inferior bird; and how can a sparrow expect to be admitted into the society of peacocks?

"I passed on in my course," said the Wind, "and he passed away also. He was not allowed to remain, and little Ida got over it, because she was obliged to do so. Proud, black horses, worth looking at, were neighing in the stable. And they were locked up; for the admiral, who had been sent by the king to inspect the new ship, and make arrangements for its purchase, was loud in admiration of these beautiful horses. I heard it all," said the Wind, "for I accompanied the gentlemen through the open door of the stable, and strewed stalks of straw, like bars of gold, at their feet. Waldemar Daa wanted gold, and the admiral wished for the proud black horses; therefore he praised them so much. But the hint was not taken, and consequently the ship was not bought. It remained on the shore covered with boards,—a Noah's ark that never got to the water—Whir-r-r-r—and that was a pity.

"In the winter, when the fields were covered with snow, and the water filled with large blocks of ice which I had blown up to

the coast," continued the Wind, "great flocks of crows and ravens, dark and black as they usually are, came and alighted on the lonely, deserted ship. Then they croaked in harsh accents of the forest that now existed no more, of the many pretty birds'-nests destroyed and the little ones left without a home; and all for the sake of that great bit of lumber, that proud ship, that never sailed forth. I made the snowflakes whirl till the snow lay like a great lake round the ship, and drifted over it. I let it hear my voice, that it might know what the storm has to say. Certainly I did my part towards teaching it seamanship.

"That winter passed away, and another winter and summer both passed, as they are still passing away, even as I pass away. The snow drifts onwards, the apple-blossoms are scattered, the leaves fall,—everything passes away, and men are passing away too. But the great man's daughters are still young, and little Ida is a rose as fair to look upon as on the day when the shipbuilder first saw her. I often tumbled her long, brown hair, while she stood in the garden by the apple-tree, musing, and not heeding how I strewed the blossoms on her hair, and dishevelled it; or sometimes, while she stood gazing at the red sun and the golden sky through the opening branches of the dark, thick foliage of the garden trees. Her sister Joanna was bright and slender as a lily; she had a tall and lofty carriage and figure, though, like her mother, rather stiff in the back. She was very fond of walking through the great hall, where hung the portraits of her ancestors. The women were represented in dresses of velvet and silk, with tiny little hats, embroidered with pearls, on their braided hair. They were all handsome women. The gentlemen appeared clad in steel, or in rich cloaks lined with squirrels' fur; they wore little ruffs, and swords at their sides. Where would Joanna's place be on that wall some day? and how would *he* look,—her noble lord and husband? This is what she thought of, and often spoke of in a low voice to herself. I heard it as I swept into the long hall, and turned round to come out again. Anna Dorothea, the pale hyacinth, a child of fourteen, was quiet and thoughtful; her large, deep, blue eyes had a dreamy look, but a childlike smile still

played round her mouth. I was not able to blow it away, neither did I wish to do so. We have met in the garden, in the hollow lane, in the field and meadow, where she gathered herbs and flowers which she knew would be useful to her father in preparing the drugs and mixtures he was always concocting. Waldemar Daa was arrogant and proud, but he was also a learned man, and knew a great deal. It was no secret, and many opinions were expressed on what he did. In his fireplace there was a fire, even in summer-time. He would lock himself in his room, and for days the fire would be kept burning; but he did not talk much of what he was doing. The secret powers of nature are generally discovered in solitude, and did he not soon expect to find out the art of making the greatest of all good things—the art of making gold. So he fondly hoped; therefore the chimney smoked and the fire crackled so constantly. Yes, I was there too," said the Wind. "'Leave it alone,' I sang down the chimney; 'leave it alone, it will all end in smoke, air, coals, and ashes, and you will burn your fingers.' But Waldemar Daa did not leave it alone, and all he possessed vanished like smoke blown by me. The splendid black horses, where are they? What became of the cows in the field, the old gold and silver vessels in cupboards and chests, and even the house and home itself? It was easy to melt all these away in the gold-making crucible, and yet obtain no gold. And so it was. Empty grew the barns and store-rooms, the cellars and cupboards; the servants decreased in number, and the mice multiplied. First one window became broken, and then another, so that I could get in at other places besides the door. 'Where the chimney smokes, the meal is being cooked,' says the proverb; but here a chimney smoked that devoured all the meals for the sake of gold. I blew round the courtyard," said the Wind, "like a watchman blowing his horn, but no watchman was there. I twirled the weather-cock round on the summit of the tower, and it creaked like the snoring of a warder, but no warder was there; nothing but mice and rats. Poverty laid the table-cloth; poverty sat in the wardrobe and in the larder. The door fell off its hinges, cracks and fissures made their appearance everywhere; so that I

could go in and out at pleasure, and that is how I know all about it. Amid smoke and ashes, sorrow, and sleepless nights, the hair and beard of the master of the house turned grey, and deep furrows showed themselves around his temples; his skin turned pale and yellow, while his eyes still looked eagerly for gold, the longed-for gold, and the result of his labour was debt instead of gain. I blew the smoke and ashes into his face and beard; I moaned through the broken window-panes, and the yawning clefts in the walls; I blew into the chests of drawers belonging to his daughters, wherein lay the clothes that had become faded and threadbare, from being worn over and over again. Such a song had not been sung at the children's cradle as I sung now. The lordly life had changed to a life of penury. I was the only one who rejoiced aloud in that castle," said the Wind. "At last I snowed them up, and they say snow keeps people warm. It was good for them, for they had no wood, and the forest, from which they might have obtained it, had been cut down. The frost was very bitter, and I rushed through loop-holes and passages, over gables and roofs with keen and cutting swiftness. The three high-born daughters were lying in bed because of the cold, and their father crouching beneath his leathern coverlet. Nothing to eat, nothing to burn, no fire on the hearth! Here was a life for high-born people! 'Give it up, give it up!' But my Lord Daa would not do that. 'After winter, spring will come,' he said, 'after want, good times. We must not lose patience, we must learn to wait. Now my horses and lands are all mortgaged, it is indeed high time; but gold will come at last—at Easter.'

"I heard him as he thus spoke; he was looking at a spider's web, and he continued, 'Thou cunning little weaver, thou dost teach me perseverance. Let any one tear thy web, and thou wilt begin again and repair it. Let it be entirely destroyed, thou wilt resolutely begin to make another till it is completed. So ought we to do, if we wish to succeed at last.'

"It was the morning of Easter-day. The bells sounded from the neighbouring church, and the sun seemed to rejoice in the sky. The master of the castle had watched through the night, in feverish

excitement, and had been melting and cooling, distilling and mixing. I heard him sighing like a soul in despair; I heard him praying, and I noticed how he held his breath. The lamp burnt out, but he did not observe it. I blew up the fire in the coals on the hearth, and it threw a red glow on his ghastly white face, lighting it up with a glare, while his sunken eyes looked out wildly from their cavernous depths, and appeared to grow larger and more prominent, as if they would burst from their sockets. 'Look at the alchymic glass,' he cried; 'something glows in the crucible, pure and heavy.' He lifted it with a trembling hand, and exclaimed, in a voice of agitation, 'Gold! gold!' He was quite giddy, I could have blown him down," said the Wind; "but I only fanned the glowing coals, and accompanied him through the door to the room where his daughters sat shivering. His coat was powdered with ashes, and there were ashes in his beard and in his tangled hair. He stood erect, and held high in the air the brittle glass that contained his costly treasure. 'Found! found! Gold! gold!' he shouted, again holding the glass aloft, that it might flash in the sunshine; but his hand trembled, and the alchymic glass fell from it, clattering to the ground, and brake in a thousand pieces. The last bubble of his happiness had burst, with a whiz and a whir, and I rushed away from the goldmaker's house.

"Late in the autumn, when the days were short, and the mist sprinkled cold drops on the berries and the leafless branches, I came back in fresh spirits, rushed through the air, swept the sky clear, and snapped off the dry twigs, which is certainly no great labour to do, yet it must be done. There was another kind of sweeping taking place at Waldemar Daa's, in the castle of Borreby. His enemy, Owe Ramel, of Basnas, was there, with the mortgage of the house and everything it contained, in his pocket. I rattled the broken windows, beat against the old rotten doors, and whistled through cracks and crevices, so that Mr. Owe Ramel did not much like to remain there. Ida and Anna Dorothea wept bitterly, Joanna stood, pale and proud, biting her lips till the blood came; but what could that avail? Owe Ramel offered Waldemar Daa

permission to remain in the house till the end of his life. No one thanked him for the offer, and I saw the ruined old gentleman lift his head, and throw it back more proudly than ever. Then I rushed against the house and the old lime-trees with such force, that one of the thickest branches, a decayed one, was broken off, and the branch fell at the entrance, and remained there. It might have been used as a broom, if any one had wanted to sweep the place out, and a grand sweeping-out there really was; I thought it would be so. It was hard for any one to preserve composure on such a day; but these people had strong wills, as unbending as their hard fortune. There was nothing they could call their own, excepting the clothes they wore. Yes, there was one thing more, an alchymist's glass, a new one, which had been lately bought, and filled with what could be gathered from the ground of the treasure which had promised so much, but failed in keeping its promise. Waldemar Daa hid the glass in his bosom, and, taking his stick in his hand, the once rich gentleman passed with his daughters out of the house of Borreby. I blew coldly upon his flushed cheeks, I stroked his grey beard and his long white hair, and I sang as well as I was able, 'Whir-r-r, whir-r-r. Gone away! gone away!' Ida walked on one side of the old man, and Anna Dorothea on the other; Joanna turned round, as they left the entrance. Why? Fortune would not turn because she turned. She looked at the stone in the walls which had once formed part of the castle of Marck Stig, and perhaps she thought of his daughters and of the old song,—

> 'The eldest and youngest, hand-in-hand,
> Went forth alone to a distant land.'

These were only two; here there were three, and their father with them also. They walked along the high-road, where once they had driven in their splendid carriage; they went forth with their father as beggars. They wandered across an open field to a mud hut, which they rented for a dollar and a half a year; a new home, with bare walls and empty cupboards. Crows and magpies fluttered about them, and cried, as if in contempt, 'Caw, caw, turned out of our nest—caw caw,' as they had done in the wood

at Borreby, when the trees were felled. Daa and his daughters could not help hearing it, so I blew about their ears to drown the noise; what use was it that they should listen? So they went to live in the mud hut in the open field, and I wandered away, over moor and meadow, through bare bushes and leafless forests, to the open sea, to the broad shores in other lands, 'Whir-r-r, whir-r-r! Away, away!' year after year."

And what became of Waldemar Daa and his daughters? Listen; the Wind will tell us:

"The last I saw of them was the pale hyacinth, Anna Dorothea. She was old and bent then; for fifty years had passed, and she had outlived them all. She could relate the history. Yonder, on the heath, near the town of Wiborg, in Jutland, stood the fine new house of the canon. It was built of red brick, with projecting gables. It was inhabited, for the smoke curled up thickly from the chimneys. The canon's gentle lady and her beautiful daughters sat in the bay-window, and looked over the hawthorn hedge of the garden towards the brown heath. What were they looking at? Their glances fell upon a stork's nest, which was built upon an old tumble-down hut. The roof, as far as one existed at all, was covered with moss and lichen. The stork's nest covered the greater part of it, and that alone was in a good condition; for it was kept in order by the stork himself. That is a house to be looked at, and not to be touched," said the Wind. "For the sake of the stork's nest it had been allowed to remain, although it is a blot on the landscape. They did not like to drive the stork away; therefore the old shed was left standing, and the poor woman who dwelt in it allowed to stay. She had the Egyptian bird to thank for that; or was it perchance her reward for having once interceded for the preservation of the nest of its black brother in the forests of Borreby? At that time she, the poor woman, was a young child, a white hyacinth in a rich garden. She remembered that time well; for it was Anna Dorothea.

"'O-h, o-h,' she sighed; for people can sigh like the moaning of the wind among the reeds and rushes. 'O-h, o-h,' she would say, 'no bell sounded at thy burial, Waldemar Daa. The poor

schoolboys did not even sing a psalm when the former lord of Borreby was laid in the earth to rest. O-h, everything has an end, even misery. Sister Ida became the wife of a peasant; that was the hardest trial which befel our father, that the husband of his daughter should be a miserable serf, whom his owner could place for punishment on the wooden horse. I suppose he is under the ground now; and Ida—alas! alas! it is not ended yet; miserable that I am! Kind Heaven, grant me that I may die.'

"That was Anna Dorothea's prayer in the wretched hut that was left standing for the sake of the stork. I took pity on the proudest of the sisters," said the Wind. "Her courage was like that of a man; and in man's clothes she served as a sailor on board ship. She was of few words, and of a dark countenance; but she did not know how to climb, so I blew her overboard before any one found out that she was a woman; and, in my opinion, that was well done," said the Wind.

"On such another Easter morning as that on which Waldemar Daa imagined he had discovered the art of making gold, I heard the tones of a psalm under the stork's nest, and within the crumbling walls. It was Anna Dorothea's last song. There was no window in the hut, only a hole in the wall; and the sun rose like a globe of burnished gold, and looked through. With what splendour he filled that dismal dwelling! Her eyes were glazing, and her heart breaking; but so it would have been, even had the sun not shone that morning on Anna Dorothea. The stork's nest had secured her a home till her death. I sung over her grave; I sung at her father's grave. I know where it lies, and where her grave is too, but nobody else knows it.

"New times now; all is changed. The old high-road is lost amid cultivated fields; the new one now winds along over covered graves; and soon the railway will come, with its train of carriages, and rush over graves where lie those whose very names are forgotten. All passed away, passed away!

"This is the story of Waldemar Daa and his daughters. Tell it better, any of you, if you know how," said the Wind; and he rushed away, and was gone.

The Old Church Bell.

(WRITTEN FOR THE SCHILLER ALBUM.)

In the country of Würtemberg, in Germany, where the acacias grow by the public road, where the apple-trees and the pear-trees in autumn bend to the earth with the weight of the precious fruit, lies the little town of Marbach. As is often the case with many of these towns, it is charmingly situated on the banks of the river Neckar, which rushes rapidly by, passing villages, old knights' castles, and green vineyards, till its waters mingle with those of the stately Rhine. It was late in the autumn ; the vine-leaves still hung upon the branches of the vines, but they were already tinted with red and gold ; heavy showers fell on the surrounding country, and the cold autumn wind blew sharp and strong. It was not at all pleasant weather for the poor. The days grew shorter and more gloomy, and, dark as it was out-of-doors in the open air, it was still darker within the small, old-fashioned houses of the village. The gable end of one of these houses faced the street, and with its small, narrow windows, presented a very mean appearance. The family who dwelt in it were also very poor and humble, but they treasured the fear of God in their innermost hearts. And now He was about to send them a child. It was the hour of the mother's sorrow, when there pealed forth from the church tower the sound of festive bells. In that solemn hour the sweet and joyous chiming filled the hearts of those in the humble dwelling with thankfulness and trust ; and when, amidst these joyous sounds, a little son was born to them, the words of prayer and praise arose from their overflowing hearts, and their happiness seemed to ring out over town and country in the liquid tones of the church bells' chime. The little one, with its bright eyes and golden hair, had been welcomed joyously on that dark November day. Its parents kissed it lovingly, and the father wrote these words in the Bible, "On the tenth of November, 1759, God sent us a son." And a short time after, when the child had been baptized, the names he had received were added, "John Christopher Frederick."

And what became of the little lad?—the poor boy of the humble town of Marbach? Ah, indeed, there was no one who thought or supposed, not even the old church bell which had been the first to sound and chime for him, that he would be the first to sing the beautiful song of "The Bell." The boy grew apace, and the world advanced with him.

While he was yet a child, his parents removed from Marbach, and went to reside in another town; but their dearest friends remained behind at Marbach, and therefore sometimes the mother and her son would start on a fine day to pay a visit to the little town. The boy was at this time about six years old, and already knew a great many stories out of the Bible, and several religious psalms. While seated in the evening on his little cane-chair, he had often heard his father read from Gellert's fables, and sometimes from Klopstock's grand poem, "The Messiah." He and his sister, two years older than himself, had often wept scalding tears over the story of Him who suffered death on the cross for us all.

On his first visit to Marbach, the town appeared to have changed but very little, and it was not far enough away to be forgotten. The house, with its pointed gable, narrow windows, overhanging walls and stories, projecting one beyond another, looked just the same as in former times. But in the churchyard there were several new graves; and there also, in the grass, close by the wall, stood the old church bell! It had been taken down from its high position, in consequence of a crack in the metal which prevented it from ever chiming again, and a new bell now occupied its place. The mother and son were walking in the churchyard when they discovered the old bell, and they stood still to look at it. Then the mother reminded her little boy of what a useful bell this had been for many hundred years. It had chimed for weddings and for christenings; it had tolled for funerals, and to give the alarm in cases of fire. With every event in the life of man the bell had made its voice heard. His mother also told him how the chiming of that old bell had once filled her heart with joy and confidence, and that in the midst of the sweet tones her child had been given to her. And the boy gazed on

the large, old bell with the deepest interest. He bowed his head over it and kissed it, old, thrown away, and cracked as it was, and standing there amidst the grass and nettles. The boy never forgot what his mother told him, and the tones of the old bell reverberated in his heart till he reached manhood, and then was he obliged to give them utterance. In such sweet remembrance was the old bell cherished by the boy, who grew up in poverty to be tall and slender, with a freckled complexion and hair almost red; but his eyes were clear and blue as the deep sea, and what was his career to be? His career was to be good, and his future life enviable. We find him taking high honours at the military school in the division commanded by the member of a family high in position, and this was an honour, that is to say, good luck. He wore gaiters, stiff collars, and powdered hair, and by this he was recognised; and, indeed, he might be known by the word of command—"March! halt! right about face!"

The old church bell had long been quite forgotten, and no one imagined it would ever again be sent to the melting furnace to make it as it was before. No one could possibly have foretold this. Equally impossible would it have been to believe that the tones of the old bell still echoed in the heart of the boy from Marbach; or that one day they would ring out loud enough and strong enough to be heard all over the world. They had already been heard in the narrow space behind the school-wall, even above the deafening sounds of "March! halt! right about face!" They had chimed so loudly in the heart of the youngster, that he had sung them to his companions, and their tones resounded to the very borders of the country. He was a free scholar in the military school, where he was provided with clothes or food. But he had his number, and his own peg; for everything here was ordered like clockwork, which we all know is of the greatest utility—people get on so much better together when their position and duties are understood. It is by pressure that a jewel is stamped. The pressure of regularity and discipline here stamped the jewel, which in the future the world so well knew.

In the chief town of the province a great festival was being

celebrated. The light streamed forth from thousands of lamps, and the rockets shot upwards toward the sky, filling the air with showers of coloured fiery sparks. A record of this bright display will live in the memory of man, for through it the pupil in the military school was in tears and sorrow. He had dared to attempt to reach foreign territories unnoticed, and must therefore give up fatherland, mother, his dearest friends, all, or sink down into the stream of common life. The old church bell had still some comfort; it stood in the shelter of the church wall in Marbach, once so elevated, now quite forgotten. The wind roared around it, and could have readily related the story of its origin and of its sweet chimes, and the wind could also tell of him to whom he had brought fresh air when, in the woods of a neighbouring country, he had sunk down exhausted with fatigue, with no other worldly possessions than hope for the future, and a written leaf from "Fiesco." The wind could have told that his only protector was an artist, who, by reading each leaf to him, made it plain; and that they amused themselves by playing at nine-pins together. The wind could also describe the pale fugitive, who, for weeks and months, lay in a wretched little road-side inn, where the landlord got drunk and raved, and where the merry-makers had it all their own way. And he, the pale fugitive, sang of the ideal.

For many heavy days and dark nights the heart must suffer to enable it to endure trial and temptation; yet, amidst it all, would the minstrel sing. Dark days and cold nights also passed over the old bell, and it noticed them not; but the bell in the man's heart felt it to be a gloomy time. What would become of this young man, and what would become of the old bell?

The old bell was, after a time, carried away to a greater distance than any one, even the warder in the bell tower, ever imagined; and the bell in the breast of the young man was heard in countries where his feet had never wandered. The tones went forth over the wide ocean to every part of the round world.

We will now follow the career of the old bell. It was, as we have said, carried far away from Marbach and sold as old copper;

then sent to Bavaria to be melted down in a furnace. And then what happened?

In the royal city of Bavaria, many years after the bell had been removed from the tower and melted down, some metal was required for a monument in honour of one of the most celebrated characters which a German people or a German land could produce. And now we see how wonderfully things are ordered. Strange things sometimes happen in this world.

In Denmark, in one of those green islands where the foliage of the beech-woods rustles in the wind, and where many Huns' graves may be seen, was another poor boy born. He wore wooden shoes, and when his father worked in a ship-yard, the boy, wrapped up in an old worn-out shawl, carried his dinner to him every day. This poor child was now the pride of his country: for the sculptured marble, the work of his hands, had astonished the world.* To him was offered the honour of forming from the clay, a model of the figure of him whose name, "John Christopher Frederick," had been written by his father in the Bible. The bust was cast in bronze, and part of the metal used for this purpose was the old church bell, whose tones had died away from the memory of those at home and elsewhere. The metal, glowing with heat, flowed into the mould, and formed the head and bust of the statue which was unveiled in the square in front of the old castle. The statue represented in living, breathing reality, the form of him who was born in poverty, the boy from Marbach, the pupil of the military school, the fugitive who struggled against poverty and oppression from the outer world; Germany's great and immortal poet, who sung of Switzerland's deliverer, William Tell, and of the heaven-inspired Maid of Orleans.

It was a beautiful sunny day; flags were waving from tower and roof in royal Stuttgard, and the church bells were ringing a joyous peal. One bell was silent; but it was illuminated by the bright sunshine which streamed from the head and bust of the renowned figure, of which it formed a part. On this day, just one hundred years had passed since the day on which the chiming of the old

* The Danish sculptor Thorwaldsen.

church bell at Marbach had filled the mother's heart with trust and joy—the day on which her child was born in poverty, and in a humble home; the same who, in after years, became rich, became the noble woman-hearted poet, a blessing to the world—the glorious, the sublime, the immortal bard, John Christopher Frederick Schiller!

Holger Danske.

In Denmark there stands an old castle named Kronenburg, close by the Sound of Elsinore, where large ships, both English, Russian, and Prussian, pass by hundreds every day. And they salute the old castle with cannons, "Boom, boom," which is as if they said, "Good-day." And the cannons of the old castle answer "Boom," which means "Many thanks." In winter no ships sail by, for the whole Sound is covered with ice as far as the Swedish coast, and has quite the appearance of a high-road. The Danish and Swedish flags wave, and Danes and Swedes say, "Good-day," and "Thank you" to each other, not with cannons, but with a friendly shake of the hand; and they exchange white bread and biscuits with each other, because foreign articles taste the best.

But the most beautiful sight of all is the old castle of Kronenburg, where Holger Danske sits in the deep, dark cellar, into which no one goes. He is clad in iron and steel, and rests his head on his strong arm; his long beard hangs down upon the marble table, into which it has become firmly rooted; he sleeps and dreams, but in his dreams he sees everything that happens in Denmark. On each Christmas-eve an angel comes to him and tells him that all he has dreamed is true, and that he may go to sleep again in peace, as Denmark is not yet in any real danger; but should danger ever come, then Holger Danske will rouse himself, and the table will burst asunder as he draws out his beard. Then he will come forth in his strength, and strike a blow that shall sound in all the countries of the world.

An old grandfather sat and told his little grandson all this about Holger Danske, and the boy knew that what his grandfather told him must be true. As the old man related this story, he was carving an image in wood to represent Holger Danske, to be fastened to the prow of a ship; for the old grandfather was a carver in wood, that is, one who carved figures for the heads of ships, according to the names given to them. And now he had carved Holger Danske, who stood there erect and proud, with his long beard, holding in one hand his broad battle-axe, while with the other he leaned on the Danish arms. The old grandfather told the little boy a great deal about Danish men and women who had distinguished themselves in olden times, so that he fancied he knew as much even as Holger Danske himself, who, after all, could only dream; and when the little fellow went to bed, he thought so much about it that he actually pressed his chin against the counterpane, and imagined that he had a long beard which had become rooted to it. But the old grandfather remained sitting at his work and carving away at the last part of it, which was the Danish arms. And when he had finished he looked at the whole figure, and thought of all he had heard and read, and what he had that evening related to his little grandson. Then he nodded his head, wiped his spectacles and put them on, and said, "Ah, yes; Holger Danske will not appear in my lifetime, but the boy who is in bed there may very likely live to see him when the event really comes to pass." And the old grandfather nodded again; and the more he looked at Holger Danske, the more satisfied he felt that he had carved a good image of him. It seemed to glow with the colour of life; the armour glittered like iron and steel. The hearts in the Danish arms grew more and more red; while the lions, with gold crowns on their heads, were leaping up.* "That is the most beautiful coat of arms in the world," said the old man. "The lion represents strength; and the hearts, gentleness and love." And as he gazed on the uppermost lion, he thought of King Canute, who chained great England to Denmark's throne; and he looked at the second lion, and thought of Waldemar, who

* The Danish arms are three lions between nine hearts.

united Denmark and conquered the Vandals. The third lion reminded him of Margaret, who united Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. But when he gazed at the red hearts, their colours glowed more deeply, even as flames, and his memory followed each in turn. The first led him to a dark, narrow prison, in which sat a prisoner, a beautiful woman, daughter of Christian the Fourth, Eleanor Ulfeld,* and the flame became a rose on her bosom, and its blossoms were not more pure than the heart of this noblest and best of all Danish women. "Ah, yes; that is indeed a noble heart in the Danish arms," said the grandfather. And his spirit followed the second flame, which carried him out to sea,† where cannons roared and the ships lay shrouded in smoke, and the flaming heart attached itself to the breast of Hvitfeldt in the form of the ribbon of an order, as he blew himself and his ship into the air in order to save the fleet. And the third flame led him to Greenland's wretched huts, where the preacher, Hans Egede,‡ ruled with love in every word and action. The flame was as a star on his breast, and added another heart to the Danish arms. And as the old grandfather's spirit followed the next hovering flame, he knew whither it would lead him. In a peasant woman's humble room stood Frederick the Sixth,§ writing

* This highly-gifted princess was the wife of Corfitz Ulfeld; he was accused of high treason, and Eleanor, whose only fault was the truest love to her unhappy husband, was compelled to remain for twenty-two years in a miserable dungeon, till the death of her persecutor, Queen Sophia Amelia.

† In the naval battle, which took place in Kjöge Bay in 1710, between the Danes and the Swedes, Hvitfeldt's ship, the *Danebrog*, took fire. To save the town of Kjöge, and the Danish fleet which were being driven by the wind towards his burning ship, he blew up his vessel, with himself and his whole crew.

‡ Hans Egede went to Greenland in 1721, and worked there for fifteen long years amid incredible privations and difficulties. He not only spread the Christian religion, but was himself the pattern of a noble Christian.

§ Once, while on a journey to the western coast of Jutland, the king came to the cottage of an old woman. As he was leaving, she ran after him, and asked him to write his name on a beam as a remembrance of his visit. The king turned back and complied with her request. Through his whole life he interested himself for the peasantry, and on that account it was that the Danish peasants begged to be allowed to carry the coffin to the royal vault at Roeskilde, four Danish miles from Copenhagen.

his name with chalk on the beam. The flame trembled on his breast and in his heart, and it was in the peasant's room that his heart became one for the Danish arms. The old grandfather wiped his eyes, for he had known King Frederick, with his silvery locks and his honest blue eyes, and had lived for him, and he folded his hands and remained for some time silent. Then his daughter came to him and said it was getting late, that he ought to rest for a while, and that the supper was on the table.

"What you have been carving is very beautiful, grandfather," said she. "Holger Danske and the old coat-of-arms; it seems to me as if I had seen the face somewhere."

"No, that is impossible," replied the old grandfather; "but *I* have seen it, and I have tried to carve it in wood, as I have retained it in my memory. It was a long time ago, while the English fleet lay in the roads, on the second of April,* when we showed that we were true, ancient Danes. I was on board the *Denmark*, in Steene Bille's squadron; I had a man by my side whom even the cannon balls seemed to fear. He sung old songs in a merry voice, and fired and fought as if he were something more than a man. I still remember his face, but from whence he came, or whither he went, I know not; no one knows. I have often thought it might have been Holger Danske himself, who had swam down to us from Kroneburg to help us in the hour of danger. That was my idea, and there stands his likeness."

The wooden figure threw a gigantic shadow on the wall, and even on part of the ceiling; it seemed as if the real Holger Danske stood behind it, for the shadow moved; but this was no doubt caused by the flame of the lamp not burning steadily. Then the daughter-in-law kissed the old grandfather, and led him to a large armchair by the table; and she, and her husband, who was the son of the old man and the father of the little boy who lay in bed, sat down to supper with him. And the old grandfather talked of the Danish lions and the Danish hearts, emblems of strength and

* On the second of April, 1801, occurred the sanguinary naval engagement between the Danes and the English, under Sir Hyde Parker and Nelson.

gentleness, and explained quite clearly that there is another strength than that which lies in a sword, and he pointed to a shelf where lay a number of old books, and amongst them a collection of Holberg's plays, which are much read and are so clever and amusing that it is easy to fancy we have known the people of those days, who are described in them.

"He knew how to fight also," said the old man; "for he lashed the follies and prejudices of people during his whole life."

Then the grandfather nodded to a place above the looking-glass, where hung an almanac, with a representation of the Round Tower * upon it, and said, "Tycho Brahe was another of those who used a sword, but not one to cut into the flesh and bone, but to make the way of the stars of heaven clear, and plain to be understood. And then *he* whose father belonged to my calling,—yes, he, the son of the old image-carver, he whom we ourselves have seen, with his silvery locks and his broad shoulders, whose name is known in all lands,—yes, he was a sculptor, while I am only a carver. Holger Danske can appear in marble, so that people in all countries of the world may hear of the strength of Denmark. Now let us drink the health of Bertel." †

But the little boy in bed saw plainly the old castle of Kronenburg, and the Sound of Elsimore, and Holger Danske, far down in the cellar, with his beard rooted to the table, and dreaming of everything that was passing above him.

And Holger Danske did dream of the little humble room in which the image-carver sat; he heard all that had been said, and he nodded in his dream, saying, "Ah, yes, remember me, you Danish people, keep me in your memory, I will come to you in the hour of need."

The bright morning light shone over Kronenburg, and the wind brought the sound of the hunting-horn across from the neighbouring shores. The ships sailed by and saluted the castle with the boom of the cannon, and Kronenburg returned the

* The Astronomical Observatory at Copenhagen.

† Bertel Thorwaldsen.

salute, "Boom, boom." But the roaring cannons did not awake Holger Danske, for they meant only "Good-morning," and "Thank you." They must fire in another fashion before he awakes; but wake he will, for there is energy yet in Holger Danske.

The Sunbeam and the Captive.

It is autumn. We stand on the ramparts, and look out over the sea. We look at the numerous ships, and at the Swedish coast on the opposite side of the Sound, rising far above the surface of the waters which mirror the glow of the evening sky. Behind us the wood is sharply defined; mighty trees surround us, and the yellow leaves flutter down from the branches. Below, at the foot of the wall, stands a gloomy-looking building enclosed in palisades. The space between is dark and narrow, but still more dismal must it be behind the iron gratings in the wall which cover the narrow loopholes or windows, for in these dungeons the most depraved of the criminals are confined. A ray of the setting sun shoots into the bare cell of one of the captives, for God's sun shines upon the evil and the good. The hardened criminal casts an impatient look at the bright ray. Then a little bird flies toward the grating, for birds twitter to the just as well as to the unjust. He only cries, "Tweet, tweet," and then perches himself near the grating, flutters his wings, pecks a feather from one of them, puffs himself out, and sets his feathers on end round his breast and throat. The bad, chained man looks at him, and a more gentle expression comes into his hard face. In his breast there rises a thought which he himself cannot rightly analyse, but the thought has some connection with the sunbeam, with the bird, and with the scent of violets, which grow luxuriantly in spring at the foot of the wall. Then there comes the sound of the hunter's horn, merry and full. The little bird starts, and flies away, the sunbeam gradually vanishes, and again there is darkness in the room and in the heart of that bad man. Still the sun

has shone into that heart, and the twittering of the bird has touched it.

Sound on, ye glorious strains of the hunter's horn; continue your stirring tones, for the evening is mild, and the surface of the sea, heaving slowly and calmly, is smooth as a mirror. Awake in the heart of the felon the memory of when he was a child, and ran at the sound to gaze through the trees at the hunt; a glad innocent boy. Make him long to be again honest and loved by his fellow men; no longer hunted as a criminal, but restored to a better life. Then he will perhaps repent, and so win pardon from Heaven—even if he must still suffer on earth.

Children's Prattle.

At a rich merchant's house there was a children's party, and the children of rich and great people were there. The merchant was a learned man, for his father had sent him to college, and he had passed his examination. His father had been at first only a cattle-dealer, but always honest and industrious, so that he had made money, and his son, the merchant, had managed to increase his store. Clever as he was, he had also a heart; but there was less said of his heart than of his money. All descriptions of people visited at the merchant's house, well born, as well as intellectual, and some who possessed neither of these recommendations.

Now it was a children's party, and there was children's prattle, which always is spoken freely from the heart. Among them was a beautiful little girl, who was terribly proud; but this had been taught her by the servants, and not by her parents, who were far too sensible people.

Her father was Groom of the Chambers, which is a high office at court, and she knew it. "I am a child of the court," she said; now she might just as well have been a child of the cellar, for no

one can help his birth; and then she told the other children that she was well-born, and said that no one who was not well-born could rise in the world. It was of no use to read and be industrious, for if a person was not well-born, he could never achieve anything. "And those whose names end with 'sen,'" said she, "can never be anything at all. We must put our arms akimbo, and make the elbows quite pointed, so as to keep these 'sen' people at a great distance." And then she stuck out her pretty little arms, and made the elbows quite pointed, to show how it was to be done; and her little arms were very pretty, for she was a sweet-looking child.

But the little daughter of the merchant became very angry at this speech, for her father's name was Petersen, and she knew that the name ended in "sen," and therefore she said as proudly as she could, "But my papa can buy a hundred dollars' worth of bonbons, and give them away to children. Can your papa do that?"

"Yes; and my papa," said the little daughter of the editor of a paper, "my papa can put your papa and everybody's papa into the newspaper. All sorts of people are afraid of him, my mamma says, for he can do as he likes with the paper." And the little maiden looked exceedingly proud, as if she had been a real princess, who may be expected to look proud.

But outside the door, which stood ajar, was a poor boy, peeping through the crack. He was of such a lowly station, that he had not been allowed even to enter the room. He had been turning the spit for the cook, and she had given him permission to stand behind the door and peep in at the well-dressed children, who were having such a merry time within; and for him that was a great deal. "Oh if I could be one of them," thought he; and then he heard what was said about names, which was quite enough to make him more unhappy. His parents at home had not even a penny to spare to buy a newspaper, much less could they write in one; and worse than all, his father's name, and of course his own, ended in "sen," and therefore he could never turn out well, which was a very sad thought. But after

all, he had been born into the world, and the station of life had been chosen for him, therefore he must be content.

And this is what happened on that evening.

* * * * * *

Many years passed, and most of the children became grown-up persons.

There stood a splendid house in the town, filled with all kinds of beautiful and valuable objects. Everybody wished to see it, and people even came in from the country round to be permitted to view the treasures it contained.

Which of the children whose prattle we have described, could call this house his own? One would suppose it very easy to guess. No, no; it is not so very easy. The house belonged to the poor little boy who had stood on that night behind the door. He had really become something great, although his name ended in "sen,"—for it was Thorwaldsen.

And the three other children,—the children of good birth, of money, and of intellectual pride,—well, they were respected and honoured in the world, for they had been well provided for by birth and position, and they had no cause to reproach themselves with what they had thought and spoken on that evening long ago, for, after all, it was mere "*children's prattle.*"

The Silver Shilling.

THERE was once a shilling which came forth from the mint springing and shouting, "Hurrah! now I am going out into the wide world." And truly it did go out into the wide world. The children held it with warm hands, the miser with a cold and convulsive grasp, and the old people turned it about, goodness knows how many times, while the young people soon allowed it to roll away from them. The shilling was made of silver, it contained very little copper, and considered itself quite out in

the world when it had been circulated for a year in the country in which it had been coined. One day, it really did go out into the world, for it belonged to a gentleman who was about to travel in foreign lands. This gentleman was not aware that the shilling lay at the bottom of his purse when he started, till he one day found it between his fingers. "Why," cried he, "here is a shilling from home; well, it must go on its travels with me now!" and the shilling jumped and rattled for joy, when it was put back again into the purse.

Here it lay amongst a number of foreign companions, who were always coming and going, one taking the place of another, but the shilling from home was always put back, and had to remain in the purse, which was certainly a mark of distinction. Many weeks passed, during which the shilling had travelled a long distance in the purse, without in the least knowing where he was. He had found out that the other coins were French and Italian; and one coin said they were in this town, and another said they were in that, but the shilling was unable to make out or imagine what they meant. A man certainly cannot see much of the world if he is tied up in a bag, and this was really the shilling's fate. But one day, as he was lying in the purse, he noticed that it was not quite closed, and so he slipped near to the opening to have a little peep into society. He certainly had not the least idea of what would follow, but he was curious, and curiosity often brings its own punishment. In his eagerness, he came so near the edge of the purse that he slipped out into the pocket of the trousers; and when, in the evening, the purse was taken out, the shilling was left behind in the corner to which it had fallen. As the clothes were being carried into the hall, the shilling fell out on the floor, unheard and unnoticed by any one. The next morning the clothes were taken back to the room, the gentleman put them on, and started on his journey again; but the shilling remained behind on the floor. After a time it was found, and being considered a good coin, was placed with three other coins. "Ah," thought the shilling, "this is pleasant; I shall now see the

world, become acquainted with other people, and learn other customs."

"Do you call that a shilling?" said some one the next moment. "That is not a genuine coin of the country,—it is false; it is good for nothing."

Now begins the story as it was afterwards related by the shilling himself. "'False! good for nothing!' said he. That remark went through and through me like a dagger. I knew that I had a true ring, and that mine was a genuine stamp. These people must at all events be wrong, or they could not mean me. But yes, I was the one they called 'false, and good for nothing.'

"'Then I must pay it away in the dark,' said the man who had received me. So I was to be got rid of in the darkness, and be again insulted in broad daylight.

"'False! good for nothing!' Oh, I must contrive to get lost, thought I. And I trembled between the fingers of the people every time they tried to pass me off shyly as a coin of the country. Ah! unhappy shilling that I was! Of what use were my silver, my stamp, and my real value here, where all these qualities were worthless! In the eyes of the world, a man is valued just according to the opinion formed of him. It must be a shocking thing to have a guilty conscience, and to be sneaking about on account of wicked deeds. As for me, innocent as I was, I could not help shuddering before their eyes whenever they brought me out, for I knew I should be thrown back again upon the table as a false pretender. At length I was paid away to a poor old woman, who received me as wages for a hard day's work. But she could not again get rid of me; no one would take me. I was to the woman a most unlucky shilling. 'I am positively obliged to pass this shilling to somebody,' said she; 'I cannot, with the best intentions, lay by a bad shilling. The rich baker shall have it,—he can bear the loss better than I can. But, after all, it is not a right thing to do.'

"'Ah!' sighed I to myself, 'am I also to be a burden on the conscience of this poor woman? Am I then in my old days so completely changed?" The woman offered me to the rich baker,

but he knew the current money too well, and as soon as he received me he threw me almost in the woman's face. She could get no bread for me, and I felt quite grieved to the heart that I should be the cause of so much trouble to another, and be treated as a cast-off coin. I who, in my young days, felt so joyful in the certainty of my own value, and knew so well that I bore a genuine stamp. I was as sorrowful now as a poor shilling can be when nobody will have him. The woman took me home again with her, and looking at me very earnestly, she said, 'No, I will not try to deceive any one with thee again. I will bore a hole through thee, that every one may know that thou art a false and worthless thing; and yet, why should I do that? Very likely thou art a lucky shilling. A thought has just struck me that it is so, and I believe it. Yes, I will make a hole in the shilling,' said she, 'and run a string through it, and then give it to my neighbour's little one to hang round her neck, as a lucky shilling.' So she drilled a hole through me.

"It is really not at all pleasant to have a hole bored through one, but we can submit to a great deal when it is done with a good intention. A string was drawn through the hole, and I became a kind of medal. They hung me round the neck of a little child, and the child laughed at me and kissed me, and I rested for one whole night on the warm, innocent breast of a child.

"In the morning the child's mother took me between her fingers, and had certain thoughts about me, which I very soon found out. First, she looked for a pair of scissors, and cut the string.

"'Lucky shilling!' said she, 'certainly that is what I mean to try.' Then she laid me in vinegar till I became quite green, and after that she filled up the hole with cement, rubbed me a little to brighten me up, and went out in the twilight hour to the lottery collector, to buy herself a ticket, with a shilling that should bring luck. How everything seemed to cause me trouble. The lottery collector pressed me so hard that I thought I should crack. I had been called false, I had been thrown away,—that I knew;

and there were many shillings and coins with inscriptions and stamps of all kinds lying about. I well knew how proud they were, so I avoided them from very shame. With the collector were several men who seemed to have a great deal to do, so I fell unnoticed into a chest, among several other coins.

"Whether the lottery ticket gained a prize, I know not; but this I know, that in a very few days after, I was recognised as a bad shilling, and laid aside. Everything that happened seemed always to add to my sorrow. Even if a man has a good character, it is no use for him to deny what is said of him, for he is not considered an impartial judge of himself.



"THE TRAVELLER EXAMINED ME ATTENTIVELY."

"A year passed, and in this way I had been changed from hand to hand; always abused, always looked at with displeasure, and trusted by no one; but I trusted in myself, and had no confidence in the world. Yes, that was a very dark time.

"At length one day I was passed to a traveller, a foreigner, the very same who had brought me away from home; and he was simple and true-hearted enough to take me for current coin. But would he also attempt to pass me? and should I again hear the outcry, 'False! good-for-nothing!' The traveller examined me attentively. 'I took thee for good coin,' said he; then suddenly a smile spread all over his face. I have never seen such a smile on any other face as on his. 'Now this is singular,' said he, 'it is a coin from my own country; a good, true shilling from home. Some one has bored a hole through it, and people have no doubt called it false. How curious that it should come into my hands! I will take it home with me to my own house.'

"Joy thrilled through me when I heard this. I had been once more called a good, honest shilling, and I was to go back to my own home, where each and all would recognise me, and know that I was made of good silver, and bore a true, genuine stamp. I should have been glad in my joy to throw out sparks of fire, but it has never at any time been my nature to sparkle. Steel can do so, but not silver. I was wrapped up in fine, white paper, that I might not mix with the other coins and be lost; and on special occasions, when people from my own country happened to be present, I was brought forward and spoken of very kindly. They said I was very interesting, and it was really quite worth while to notice that those who are interesting have often not a single word to say for themselves.

"At length I reached home. All my cares were at an end. Joy again overwhelmed me; for was I not good silver, and had I not a genuine stamp? I had no more insults or disappointments to endure; although, indeed, there was a hole through me, as if I were false; but suspicions are nothing when a man is really true, and every one should persevere in acting honestly, for all will be made right in time. That is my firm belief," said the shilling.

The Loveliest Rose in the World.

THERE lived once a great queen, in whose garden were found at all seasons the most splendid flowers, from every land in the world. She specially loved roses, and therefore she possessed the most beautiful varieties of this flower, from the wild hedge-rose, with its apple-scented leaves, to the splendid Provence rose. They grew near the shelter of the walls, wound themselves round columns and window-frames, crept along passages and over the ceilings of the halls. They were of every fragrance and colour.

But care and sorrow dwelt within these halls; the queen lay upon a sick bed, and the doctors declared that she must die.

"There is still one thing that could save her," said one of the wisest among them. "Bring her the loveliest rose in the world; one which exhibits the purest and brightest love, and if it is brought to her before her eyes close, she will not die."

Then from all parts came those who brought roses that bloomed in every garden, but they were not the right sort. The flower must be one from the garden of love; but which of the roses there showed forth the highest and purest love? The poets sang of this rose, the loveliest in the world, and each named one which he considered worthy of that title; and intelligence of what was required was sent far and wide to every heart that beat with love; to every class, age, and condition.

"No one has yet named the flower," said the wise man. "No one has pointed out the spot where it blooms in all its splendour. It is not a rose from the coffin of Romeo and Juliet, or from the grave of Walburg, though these roses will live in everlasting song. It is not one of the roses which sprouted forth from the blood-stained fame of Winkelreid. The blood which flows from the breast of a hero who dies for his country is sacred, and his memory is sweet, and no rose can be redder than the blood which flows from his veins. Neither is it the magic flower of Science, to obtain which wondrous flower a man devotes many an hour of his fresh young life in sleepless nights, in a lonely chamber."

"I know where it blooms," said a happy mother, who came with her lovely child to the bedside of the queen. "I know where the loveliest rose in the world is. It is seen on the blooming cheeks of my sweet child, when it expresses the pure and holy love of infancy; when refreshed by sleep it opens its eyes, and smiles upon me with childlike affection."

"This is a lovely rose," said the wise man; "but there is one still more lovely."

"Yes, one far more lovely," said one of the women. "I have seen it, and a loftier and purer rose does not bloom. But it was white, like the leaves of a blush-rose. I saw it on the cheeks of the queen. She had taken off her golden crown, and through the long, dreary night she carried her sick child in her arms. She

wept over it, kissed it, and prayed for it as only a mother can pray in the hour of her anguish."

"Holy and wonderful in its might is the white rose of grief, but it is not the one we seek."

"No; the loveliest rose in the world I saw at the Lord's table," said the good old bishop. "I saw it shine as if an angel's face had appeared. A young maiden knelt at the altar, and renewed the vows made at her baptism; and there were white roses and red roses on the blushing cheeks of that young girl. She looked up to heaven with all the purity and love of her young spirit, in all the expression of the highest and purest love."

"May she be blessed!" said the wise man; "but no one has yet named the loveliest rose in the world."

Then there came into the room a child—the queen's little son. Tears stood in his eyes, and glistened on his cheeks; he carried a great book, and the binding was of velvet, with silver clasps. "Mother," cried the little boy; "only hear what I have read." And the child seated himself by the bedside, and read from the book of Him who suffered death on the cross to save all men, even those who are yet unborn. He read, "Greater love hath no man than this," and as he read a roseate hue spread over the cheeks of the queen, and her eyes became so enlightened and clear, that she saw from the leaves of the book a lovely rose spring forth, a type of Him who shed His blood on the cross.

"I see it," she said. "He who beholds this, the loveliest rose on earth, shall never die."

A Leaf from Heaven.

High up in the clear, pure air flew an angel, with a flower plucked from the garden of heaven. As he was kissing the flower a very little leaf fell from it and sunk down into the soft earth in the middle of a wood. It immediately took root, sprouted, and sent out shoots among the other plants.

"What a ridiculous little shoot!" said one. "No one will recognise it; not even the thistle nor the stinging-nettle."

"It must be a kind of garden plant," said another; and so they sneered and despised the plant as a thing from a garden.

"Where are you coming?" said the tall thistles whose leaves were all armed with thorns. "It is stupid nonsense to allow yourself to shoot out in this way; we are not here to support you."

Winter came, and the plant was covered with snow, but the snow glittered over it as if it had sunshine beneath as well as above.

When spring came, the plant appeared in full bloom: a more beautiful object than any other plant in the forest. And now the professor of botany presented himself, one who could explain his knowledge in black and white. He examined and tested the plant, but it did not belong to his system of botany, nor could he possibly find out to what class it did belong. "It must be some degenerate species," said he; "I do not know it, and it is not mentioned in any system."

"Not known in any system!" repeated the thistles and the nettles.

The large trees which grew round it saw the plant and heard the remarks, but they said not a word either good or bad, which is the wisest plan for those who are ignorant.

There passed through the forest a poor innocent girl; her heart was pure, and her understanding increased by her faith. Her chief inheritance had been an old Bible, which she read and valued. From its pages she had heard the voice of God speaking to her, and telling her to remember what was said of Joseph's brethren when persons wished to injure her. "They imagined evil in their hearts, but God turned it to good." If we suffer wrongfully, if we are misunderstood or despised, we must think of Him who was pure and holy, and who prayed for those who nailed Him to the cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

The girl stood still before the wonderful plant, for the green leaves exhaled a sweet and refreshing fragrance, and the flowers glittered and sparkled in the sunshine like coloured flames, and

the harmony of sweet sounds lingered round them as if each concealed within itself a deep fount of melody, which thousands of years could not exhaust. With pious gratitude the girl looked upon this glorious work of God, and bent down over one of the branches, that she might examine the flower and inhale the sweet perfume. Then a light broke in on her mind, and her heart expanded. Gladly would she have plucked a flower, but she could not overcome her reluctance to break one off. She knew it would so soon fade; so she took only a single green leaf, carried it home, and laid it in her Bible, where it remained ever green, fresh, and unfading. Between the pages of the Bible it still lay when, a few weeks afterwards, that Bible was laid under the young girl's head in her coffin. A holy calm rested on her face as if the earthly remains bore the impress of the truth that she now stood in the presence of God.

In the forest the wonderful plant still continued to bloom till it grew and became almost a tree, and all the birds of passage bowed themselves before it.

"That plant is a foreigner, no doubt," said the thistles and the burdocks. "We can never conduct ourselves like that in this country." And the black forest snails actually spat at the flower.

Then came the swineherd; he was collecting thistles and shrubs to burn them for the ashes. He pulled up the wonderful plant, roots and all, and placed it in his bundle. "This will be as useful as any," he said; so the plant was carried away.

Not long after, the king of the country suffered from the deepest melancholy. He was diligent and industrious, but employment did him no good. They read deep and learned books to him, and then the lightest and most trifling that could be found, but all to no purpose. Then they applied for advice to one of the wise men of the world, and he sent them a message to say that there was one remedy which would relieve and cure him, and that it was a plant of heavenly origin which grew in the forest in the king's own dominions. The messenger described the flower so that its appearance could not be mistaken.

Then said the swineherd, "I am afraid I carried this plant

away from the forest in my bundle, and it has been burnt to ashes long ago. But I did not know any better."

"You did not know any better! Ignorance upon ignorance, indeed!"

The poor swineherd took these words to heart, for they were addressed to him; he knew not that there were others who were equally ignorant. Not even a leaf of the plant could be found. There was one, but it lay in the coffin of the dead; no one knew anything about it.

Then the king, in his melancholy, wandered out to the spot in the wood. "Here is where the plant stood," he said; "it is a sacred place." Then he ordered that the place should be surrounded with a golden railing, and a sentry stationed near it.

The botanical professor wrote a long treatise about the heavenly plant, and for this he was loaded with gold, which improved the position of himself and his family.

And this fact is really the most pleasant part of the story. For the plant had disappeared, and the king remained as melancholy and sad as ever, but the sentry said he had always been so.

The Girl who Trod on the Loaf.

THERE was once a girl who trod on a loaf to avoid soiling her shoes, and the misfortunes that happened to her in consequence are well known. Her name was Ingé; she was a poor child, but proud and presuming, and with a bad and cruel disposition. When quite a little child she would delight in catching flies, and tearing off their wings, so as to make creeping things of them. When older, she would take cockchafers and beetles, and stick pins through them. Then she pushed a green leaf, or a little scrap of paper towards their feet, and when the poor creatures would seize it and hold it fast, and turn over and over in their struggles to get free from the pin, she would say, "The cockchafer is reading;

see how he turns over the leaf." She grew worse instead of better with years, and, unfortunately, she was pretty, which caused her to be excused, when she should have been sharply reproved.

"Your headstrong will requires severity to conquer it," her mother often said to her. "As a little child you used to trample on my apron, but one day I fear you will trample on my heart." And, alas! this fear was realised.

Ingé was taken to the house of some rich people, who lived at a distance, and who treated her as their own child, and dressed her so fine that her pride and arrogance increased.

When she had been there about a year, her patroness said to her, "You ought to go, for once, to see your parents, Ingé."

So Ingé started to go and visit her parents; but she only wanted to show herself in her native place, that the people might see how fine she was. She reached the entrance of the village and saw the young labouring men and maidens standing together chatting, and her own mother amongst them. Ingé's mother was sitting on a stone to rest, with a fagot of sticks lying before her, which she had picked up in the wood. Then Ingé turned back; she who was so finely dressed felt ashamed of her mother, a poorly clad woman, who picked up wood in the forest. She did not turn back out of pity for her mother's poverty, but from pride.

Another half-year went by, and her mistress said, "You ought to go home again, and visit your parents, Ingé, and I will give you a large wheaten loaf to take to them, they will be glad to see you, I am sure."

So Ingé put on her best clothes, and her new shoes, drew her dress up around her, and set out, stepping very carefully, that she might be clean and neat about the feet, and there was nothing wrong in doing so. But when she came to the place where the footpath led across the moor, she found small pools of water, and a great deal of mud, so she threw the loaf into the mud, and trod upon it, that she might pass without wetting her feet. But as she stood with one foot on the loaf and the other lifted up to step forward, the loaf began to sink under her, lower and lower, till she disappeared altogether, and only a few bubbles on the surface

of the muddy pool remained, to show where she had sunk. And this is the story.

But where did Ingé go? She sank into the ground, and went down to the Marsh Woman, who is always brewing there.

The Marsh Woman is related to the elf maidens, who are well known, for songs are sung and pictures painted about them. But of the Marsh Woman nothing is known, excepting that when a mist arises from the meadows, in summer-time, it is because she is brewing beneath them. To the Marsh Woman's brewery Ingé



"SO INGÉ PUT ON HER BEST CLOTHES AND HER NEW SHOES."—*p.* 370.

sunk, down to a place which no one can endure for long. A heap of mud is a palace compared with the Marsh Woman's brewery; and as Ingé fell she shuddered in every limb, and soon became cold and stiff as marble. Her foot was still fastened to the loaf, which bowed her down as a golden ear of corn bends the stem.

An evil spirit soon took possession of Ingé, and carried her to a still worse place, in which she saw crowds of unhappy people, waiting in a state of agony for the gates of mercy to be opened to them, and in every heart was a miserable and eternal feeling of

unrest. It would take too much time to describe the various tortures these people suffered, but Ingé's punishment consisted in standing there as a statue, with her foot fastened to a loaf. She could move her eyes about, and see all the misery around her, but she could not turn her head ; and when she saw the people looking at her she thought they were admiring her pretty face and fine clothes, for she was still vain and proud. But she had forgotten how soiled her clothes had become while in the Marsh Woman's brewery, and that they were covered with mud ; a snake had also fastened itself in her hair, and hung down her back, while from each fold in her dress a great toad peeped out and croaked like an asthmatic poodle. Worse than all was the terrible hunger that tormented her, and she could not stoop to break off a piece of the loaf on which she stood. No ; her back was too stiff, and her whole body like a pillar of stone. And then came creeping over her face and eyes flies without wings ; she winked and blinked, but they could not fly away, for their wings had been pulled off ; this, added to the hunger she felt, was horrible torture.

"If this last much longer," she said, "I shall not be able to bear it." But it did last, and she had to bear it, without being able to help herself.

A tear, followed by many scalding tears, fell upon her head, and rolled over her face and neck, down to the loaf on which she stood. Who could be weeping for Ingé ? She had a mother in the world still, and the tears of sorrow which a mother sheds for her child always find their way to that child's heart, but they often increase the torment instead of being a relief. And Ingé could hear all that was said about her in the world she had left, and every one seemed cruel to her. The sin she had committed in treading on the loaf was known on earth, for she had been seen by the cowherd from the hill, when she was crossing the marsh and had disappeared.

When her mother wept and exclaimed, "Ah, Ingé ! what grief thou hast caused thy mother ! " she would say, "Oh that I had never been born ! My mother's tears are useless now."

And then the words of the kind people who had adopted her

came to her ears, when they said, "Ingé was a sinful girl, who did not value the gifts of God, but trampled them under her feet."

"Ah," thought Ingé, "they should have punished me, and driven all my naughty tempers out of me."

A song was made about "The girl who trod on a loaf to keep her shoes from being soiled," and this song was sung everywhere. The story of her sin was also told to the little children, and they called her "wicked Ingé," and said she was so naughty she ought to be punished. Ingé heard all this, and her heart became hardened and full of bitterness.

But one day, while hunger and grief were gnawing in her hollow frame, she heard a little, innocent child, while listening to the tale of the vain, haughty Ingé, burst into tears and exclaim, "But will she never come up again?"

And she heard the reply, "No, she will never come up again."

"But if she were to say she was sorry, and ask pardon, and promise never to do so again?" asked the little one.

"Yes, then she might come; but she will not beg pardon," was the answer.

"Oh, I wish she would!" said the child, who was quite unhappy about it. "I should be so glad. I would give up my doll and all my playthings, if she could only come here again. Poor Ingé! it is so dreadful for her."

These pitying words penetrated to Ingé's inmost heart, and seemed to do her good. It was the first time any one had said, "Poor Ingé!" without saying something about her faults. A little innocent child was weeping, and praying for mercy for her. It made her feel quite strange, and she would gladly have wept herself, and it added to her torment to find she could not do so. And while she thus suffered in a place where nothing changed, years passed away on earth, and she heard her name less frequently mentioned. But one day a sigh reached her ear, and the words, "Ingé! Ingé! what a grief thou hast been to me! I said it would be so." It was the last sigh of her dying mother.

After this, Ingé heard her kind mistress say, "Ah, poor Ingé! shall I ever see thee again? Perhaps I may, for we know not

what may happen in the future." But Ingé knew right well that her mistress would never come to that dreadful place.

Time passed—a long, bitter time—when Ingé heard her name pronounced once more, and saw what seemed two bright stars shining above her. They were two gentle eyes closing on earth. Many years had passed since the little girl had lamented and wept about "poor Ingé." That child was now an old woman, whom God was taking to Himself. In the last hour of existence the events of a whole life often appear before us; and in this hour the old woman remembered how, when a child, she had shed tears over the story of Ingé, and she prayed for her now. As the eyes of the old woman closed to earth, the eyes of the soul opened upon the hidden things of eternity, and then she, in whose last thoughts Ingé had been so vividly present, saw how deeply the poor girl had sunk. She burst into tears at the sight, and in heaven, as she had done when a little child on earth, she wept and prayed for poor Ingé. Her tears and her prayers echoed through the dark void that surrounded the tormented captive soul, and the unexpected mercy was obtained for it through an angel's tears. As in thought Ingé seemed to act over again every sin she had committed on earth, she trembled, and tears she had never yet been able to weep rushed to her eyes. It seemed impossible that the gates of mercy could ever be opened to her; but while she acknowledged this in deep penitence, a beam of radiant light shot suddenly into the depths upon her. More powerful than the sunbeam that dissolves the man of snow which the children have raised, more quickly than the snowflake melts and becomes a drop of water on the warm lips of a child, was the stony form of Ingé changed, and as a little bird she soared, with the speed of lightning, upward to the world of mortals. A bird that felt timid and shy to all things around it, that seemed to shrink with shame from meeting any living creature, and hurriedly sought to conceal itself in a dark corner of an old ruined wall; there it sat cowering and unable to utter a sound, for it was voiceless. Yet how quickly the little bird discovered the beauty of everything around it. The sweet, fresh air; the soft radiance of the moon, as its light spread over

the earth ; the fragrance which exhaled from bush and tree, made it feel happy as it sat there clothed in its fresh, bright plumage. All creation seemed to speak of beneficence and love. The bird wanted to give utterance to thoughts that stirred in his breast, as the cuckoo and the nightingale in the spring, but it could not. Yet in heaven can be heard the song of praise, even from a worm ; and the notes trembling in the breast of the bird were as audible to Heaven even as the psalms of David before they had fashioned themselves into words and song.

Christmas-time drew near, and a peasant who dwelt close by the old wall stuck up a pole with some ears of corn fastened to the top, that the birds of heaven might have a feast, and rejoice in the happy, blessed time. And on Christmas morning the sun arose and shone upon the ears of corn, which were quickly surrounded by a number of twittering birds. Then, from a hole in the wall, gushed forth in song the swelling thoughts of the bird as he issued from his hiding-place to perform his first good deed on earth,—and in heaven it was well known who that bird was.

The winter was very hard ; the ponds were covered with ice, and there was very little food for either the beasts of the field or the birds of the air. Our little bird flew away into the public roads, and found here and there, in the ruts of the sledges, a grain of corn, and at the halting places some crumbs. Of these he ate only a few, but he called around him the other birds and the hungry sparrows, that they too might have food. He flew into the towns, and looked about, and wherever a kind hand had strewed bread on the window-sill for the birds, he only ate a single crumb himself, and gave all the rest to the other birds. In the course of the winter, the bird had in this way collected many crumbs and given them to other birds, till they equalled the weight of the loaf on which Ingé had trod to keep her shoes clean ; and when the last bread-crumb had been found and given, the grey wings of the bird became white, and spread themselves out for flight.

"See, yonder is a sea-gull!" cried the children, when they saw

the white bird, as it dived into the sea, and rose again into the clear sunlight, white and glittering. But no one could tell whither it went then, although some declared it flew straight to the sun.

The Dumb Book.

By the high-road in the forest lay a lonely peasant's hut; the path to it led right through the farmyard. The sun shone, and all the windows were open, and in the house there seemed a great bustle and movement; but in the garden, in an arbour formed of blooming elder-branches, stood an open coffin. A dead man had been carried out, who on this morning was to be buried. Nobody stood by the coffin looking sorrowfully at the dead; no one shed a tear over him. His face was covered with a white cloth, and under his head lay a large, thick book, the leaves of which were entirely composed of blotting-paper, and on each leaf lay a withered flower. It was a complete herbarium, gathered by him in different parts of the world; and was to be buried with him for so he wished it.

"Who is the dead man?" we inquired.

"The old student," was the reply.

He had once been a lively lad; had studied the dead languages, composed many songs, and even poems. Then something happened to him which led him to drink; and when, at last, his health was ruined, he came to reside here in the country, some friend paying for his board and lodging. He was as gentle as a child, excepting when the dark mood was on him, and then he became fierce as a lion, and would run about the woods like a hunted stag. But when we got him home again, and prevailed upon him to open his book with the dried plants, he would often sit for whole days, looking first at one plant and then at another, and at times the tears would roll down his cheeks. Heaven knows what he was thinking of. He begged us to put the book

into his coffin; and now there he lies. In a little while the lid will be nailed down, and he will be at rest in the grave.

The face cloth was raised, and upon the features of the dead there was peace, and a sunbeam fell upon them. A swallow shot through the arbour with arrowy flight, turned rapidly, and twittered over the dead man's head.

What a strange feeling (and no doubt we have all experienced it) is that which comes over us as we turn over and read the old letters of our youthful days. An entirely new life rises before us, with all its hopes and sorrows. How many with whom we were then intimate seem dead to us, although they are still living, but we have long ceased to think of them, whom we once thought to retain in our memory for ever, and with whom we were to share every sorrow and joy. So did the withered oak-leaf in the book remind its owner of the friend, the schoolfellow, who was to have been his friend for life. He had fastened that green leaf in the student's cap in the green wood, when they had vowed eternal friendship; and now where is he? The leaf has been preserved, but the friendship has perished. And here is a foreign hothouse plant, too delicate for the gardens of the north: the leaves seem still to keep their fragrance. *She* gave it him, that young lady in the nobleman's garden. Here is a water-rose, which he plucked himself, and moistened with salt tears—a rose of sweet waters. And what tale could not the leaves of that rose tell, if they could speak. What were his thoughts when he plucked it, and kept it? Here is a lily-of-the-valley from the solitudes of the forest. Here an evergreen, from a flower-pot at the tavern; and here a simple blade of grass.

The blooming elder-branches wave their fragrant blossoms over the head of the dead. The swallow flies past again, crying, "Twit, twit," and now the men come with nails and hammer; the lid is placed over the dead man, while his head rests on the silent book, its memories withered and dead.

The Bell, or Nature's Music.

In the narrow streets of a large city, towards evening, when the setting sun threw a golden light over roof and chimney, there might sometimes be heard, by one and another, a strange tone, something like the sound of a church bell. Only for a moment, however, for the continual rumbling of carriages and the hum of voices often drowned the tone. Still, people would say, "The evening bell is sounding, for it is sunset." Those who wandered outside the town after sunset, where the houses stood at greater distances from each other, could see the evening sky in all its beauty, and hear the sound of the bell much more clearly. It was as if the tones came from a cathedral lying in the still depths of the fragrant forest, and the people looked in that direction with solemnised feelings.

After some time, one said to another, "Is there a church in the wood yonder? That bell has a singularly fine tone; shall we go a little nearer and listen?" And the rich people drove there, and the poor walked, but the way seemed long and interminable, for they were no nearer to the tones of the bell. By a number of willow-trees, which grew on the borders of the forest, they sat down, and glanced up at the long branches, and fancied they were really in the green wood. A pastrycook from the town came amongst them, and pitched a tent, and then came another and hung a bell over his tent, which he had covered with tar to protect it from the rain, but the clapper was wanting.

When the people returned home they said it had been all very romantic, which was really more than merely taking tea. Three persons, however, declared that they had been to the very end of the wood; they had always heard the sound of the bell, but it appeared to them as if it came from the town. One of them wrote a song about it, and said that the bell was like the voice of a mother singing to a good and beloved child. No melody could be more beautiful than the sound of the bell.

The emperor was informed of this matter, and promised that whoever really found out what the sound came from, should have

the title of "Bell-ringer to the world," even if it should prove that there was no bell in the case.

Many went to the wood because of the good entertainment there, but only one returned with a sort of explanation. None of them had gone far enough into the forest, nor, indeed, had he; yet he said that the bell-like sound proceeded from a large owl who lived in a hollow tree, and who was the owl of wisdom, and constantly striking its head against the trunk; but whether the sound came from the owl's head, or from the trunk of the tree, he could not say with certainty. However, he was appointed "Bell-ringer to the world," and every year wrote a little treatise upon the subject, which left people who read it as wise as they were before.

On a certain day a confirmation was held at a church in the town. The clergyman spoke well and earnestly, and the candidates were deeply moved. It was a very important day for them. From children they at once became grown people. The childish soul seemed to have assumed the sense and feeling of mature age. It was a glorious summer day, and as the confirmed children walked out of the town there sounded from the deep wood the great, mysterious bell. A wish arose to go and see what it was, in all of them excepting three. One of these, a girl, wanted to go home to try on a ball dress; for she was invited to this ball on the occasion of her confirmation, or she would not have thought of going. The second was a poor boy, who had borrowed the coat and boots of his landlord's son to be confirmed in, and he had to return them by a certain time. The third said that he never went to a strange place, unless his parents were with him; that he always had been a good child, and that he would continue to be so, even after his confirmation, and therefore no one was to laugh at him; but they did laugh at him notwithstanding. So these three did not go, but the others stepped on, while the sun shone, the birds sung, and the newly-confirmed sang also, and held each other's hands; for they had not yet any position in life, but were all equal in the eyes of God that day of their confirmation. Two of the youngest soon became tired, and returned

home; and then two little girls sat down to weave garlands of flowers, and went no farther. And when at last the rest reached the willow-trees, where the confectioner's tent was pitched, they said, "Now we are really a long way out, there is no bell; it does not exist at all, people only fancy it."

Then suddenly the bell sounded so beautifully and solemnly that four or five determined to go still deeper into the forest. The trees grew so closely together, and the leafy branches hung down so low, that it was really very difficult to go forward. Forest lilies and anemones grew high from the ground, and blooming convolvulus and blackberry blossoms hung in long garlands from tree to tree, while the nightingale sung and the sunbeams glanced through the trees. It was all beautiful to see, but the path was not fit for girls, who would have torn their clothes to pieces. There lay large blocks of stone, overgrown with moss of various colours, and the fresh spring water bubbled forth, and seemed to utter the words, "Gurgle, gurgle."

"That cannot be the bell," said one of the newly confirmed; and he laid himself down and listened. "It should be studied carefully," said he; so he remained behind, and let the others go forward.

They came to a cottage built with the bark of trees and branches; a large tree loaded with wild apples stretched itself over the roof, which was covered with roses, as if it would pour a blessing upon it. The long branches drooped just over the gable, and to the end of one hung a little bell. Could this be the bell they had heard? They all with one voice agreed that it must be, excepting one, who said "that this bell was too small to be heard at such a distance, and had a very different sound to the one that touched men's hearts so deeply." He who spoke thus was a king's son, and the others said that persons of that sort always wanted to be thought wiser than any one else. Therefore they allowed him to go on alone, and the farther he went the more his mind was impressed with the solitude of the forest; but still he heard the little bell which had so pleased the others, and sometimes the wind carried towards him sounds from the

confectioner's tent, and he could hear his late companions singing over their tea.

But the deep tones of the bell became louder and stronger, sometimes as if an organ were playing in unison with them, and these sounds were at the left side, where the heart is placed. Something rustled in the bushes, and then a little boy stood before the king's son; he wore wooden shoes, and his jacket was so small that the sleeves did not reach to his wrists. They knew each other; the boy was one of those who had been confirmed, but who could not accompany the rest because he had to return



"'WE CAN GO TOGETHER,' SAID THE KING'S SON."

home with the coat and boots which the landlord's son had lent him. He had done this, and had started again in his wooden shoes and his old clothes, for he had heard the bell sound so deeply and solemnly that he felt he must go on.

"We can go together," said the king's son.

But the poor newly confirmed boy in the wooden shoes was quite ashamed; he pulled down the short sleeves of his jacket, and said he feared he could not walk fast enough; besides, he remarked, the bell should be sought for on the right hand, for there the space was larger and more beautiful.

"Then we shall not meet again," said the king's son, nodding to the poor boy as he went into the deepest depths of the forest, where the brambles tore his poor, shabby clothes, and scratched his face, his hands, and his feet, till they bled.

The king's son also had a few rough scratches, but the sun shone brightly on his path, and it is he whom we must follow, for he was an active youth. "I must and will find the bell," said he, "though I have to go to the end of the world for it."

Some ugly apes sat in the branches of the trees and grinned at him, showing all their teeth. "Shall we beat him?" said they; "Shall we thrash him? he is a king's son."

But he went on undaunted, deeper and still deeper into the forest, where most wonderful flowers grew. White lilies, like stars, with ruby-red stamens; tulips, as blue as the sky, sparkling as they were moved by the wind; only think how these flowers and trees must have gleamed in the sunshine! Through openings in the branches could be seen beautiful green meadows, where the hart and the hind were sporting on the soft grass. There were also large tracts of land, interspersed with quiet lakes, on whose smooth surface white swans skimmed and flapped their wings. The king's son frequently stood still and listened, for he sometimes fancied the sound of the bell came to him from one of the lakes, but after a few moments he would feel sure it could not be from any other place than the forest. The sun went down; the atmosphere reflected the red light from the sky like fire; silence reigned in the forest. Then he sank on his knees and sung his evening hymn. "I shall never find what I am seeking," he said; "the sun is going down, and night, dark night approaches. Yet once more perhaps I may see the round red sun before he disappears beneath the horizon. I will climb upon these rocks, for they are higher than the highest trees." Then he contrived to climb upon the wet rocks by seizing upon the roots and creeping-plants that grew near them; water-snakes were wriggling about, and the toads seemed to bay at him, yet he reached the highest point before the sun had quite set. The

king's son stretched forth his arms towards heaven, towards the sea, and towards the forest.

Suddenly, from a road at the right hand, came the poor newly confirmed boy with the short jacket and the wooden shoes ; he too had come just in time, and had arrived at the same place by a different road. And they ran to meet each other, and stood hand-in-hand in the great temple of nature and poetry. And above them sounded the invisible, holy bell—Nature's music ; and happy spirits floated around them singing hallelujahs of joy.

THE END.

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